Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 548. I would like to thank the gentleman from New York, my good friend, Mr. ACKERMAN, for introducing this important resolution, and for Chairman LANTOS of our Foreign Affairs Committee for bringing it before the floor today.

With the execution last Wednesday of an anti-Syrian Lebanese parliamentarian in a Christian suburb of Beirut, and the announcement today that the Lebanese Parliament will delay until next month the election of a new Lebanese president due to a Hezbollah-led opposition boycott, both Syria and Iran are now one step closer to their strategic goal of once again dominating Lebanon.

Four anti-Syrian parliamentarians are all that stand in the way of the detestable efforts of pro-Syrian forces within Lebanon to impose their presidential candidate on all of Lebanon and deny Lebanon its true sovereignty. They will undoubtedly use the time afforded by the delay in the presidential election to effectively finish the job they started in the wake of the coalition's March 14 electoral victory.

And what is the goal of these pro-Syrian forces? To gain a parliamentary majority through assassination and terror. Led by Hezbollah, the pro-Syrian parliamentary bloc has repeatedly demanded that a compromise candidate who will bring national unity be elected to the presidency next month. However, Mr. Speaker, just the opposite is true. A compromise and a unity candidate can only serve to bring about the election of yet another Syrian and Iranian puppet to the presidency. Like the outgoing so-called president, such a leader will work to prevent Lebanon from extricating itself from Iranian and Syrian influence and total control.

Furthermore, the inclusion of pro-Syrian and Iranian elements in the Lebanese Government renders the government, regardless of the individual desires of the members, and indeed the entire electoral process, an effective tool of Syria and Iran. Some had hoped that Hezbollah's entry into Lebanese politics would signal its integration into Lebanese society and force its leaders to dismantle Hezbollah's military and terrorist infrastructure. Sadly, the opposite has occurred. Allowing an Islamic terrorist entity to use the political process and legitimatize itself without first demanding that it stop its objectionable behavior only serve to perpetuate and enhance the threat.

Last October, Iran and Syria changed their calculations as to how to best use Hezbollah to advance their interests and undermine the sovereignty of Lebanon. They instructed Hezbollah to withdraw from the government.

Since then, Hezbollah, joined by other Syrian and Iranian proxies, has worked steadily to overthrow the government by politically paralyzing it in parliament and assassinating its supporters. At the same time, they have reportedly provided massive amounts of arms, training, and financial support to Hezbollah as it rebuilds from the conflict with Israel last summer.

Additionally, reports that the Lebanese Army has enabled Hezbollah to reassert its control over southern Lebanon continues to gravely concern us.

Mr. Speaker, simply put, we cannot afford to continue to pursue a policy toward Lebanon based on willful negligence. We must accept that a moderate government will only materialize after the Syrian and Iranian proxies in Lebanon are defeated and dismantled. This resolution represents a step in the correct direction by voicing its unequivocal support for a true democratic government, and all those within Lebanon who have struggled against Syrian and Iranian control over their homeland for far too long truly deserve our support. I strongly urge my colleagues to support Mr. ACKERMAN's resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in strong support of House Resolution 548. This resolution expresses support for Lebanon's democratic institutions and the need to bring those responsible for the assassination of Lebanese public figures to justice.

Lebanon is a key ally of the United States and deserves our unwavering support as they continue to recover from last year's war.

Lebanon is a diverse country with over 17 religious groups, nevertheless, there is a strong sense of national unity within this country and its citizens often identify themselves as Lebanese before identifying with their own religious factions.

Lebanon is the example of what a democracy can and should be in the Middle East and I encourage all party leaders in the parliament to remain committed to finding a compromise presidential candidate. It is important that the process is followed and that a unified government remains in place.

Political assassinations over the past several years have continued to plague Lebanon and have derailed the country's efforts to enact real reform measures. The individuals responsible for these murders must be brought to justice.

Lebanon is at a crossroad and the United States must remain committed to helping this nascent democracy.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 548, a resolution expressing the continued concern that we as a Congress and as a Nation have for the Lebanese people and their government.

The Cedar Revolution in 2005 led to the withdrawal of Syrian forces that had occupied Lebanon for more than three decades. After the withdrawal, the government of Prime Minister Fuad Siniora committed to creating a strong, democratic Lebanon, free of occupation or outside influence. Lebanon is fighting many enemies of freedom, both within and outside the country.

We have all seen the horrific news reports of the assassinations and attempted assassinations of anti-Syrian lawmakers in Lebanon, the most recent occurring just last week. The brave men and women who are struggling to move Lebanon forward have become targets in their own country. Hezbollah and other pro-Syrian factions in Lebanon know that they are in the minority, and have begun a desperation campaign to kill as many of their opponents as possible. Members of the Parliament have had to go into hiding outside of Lebanon, and lay their lives on the line when they return to conduct government business.

As Lebanon prepares for presidential elections this November, I believe it is vital that we reiterate our support for Lebanon and her people. H. Res. 548 reaffirms our support of the many United Nations resolutions that condemn Syria and Iran for their continued roles in arming the enemies of a free Lebanon, and expresses our appreciation to the many countries that have contributed funding and personnel to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFL). Our Lebanese friends must know that we stand beside them as they continue to strengthen their government and bring to justice those responsible for the killings.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this important resolution.

□ 1215

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire if the distinguished ranking member has any additional speakers.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I have no additional speakers, and I'd like to yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 548, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GLOBAL POVERTY ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1302) to require the President to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to further the United States foreign policy objective of promoting the reduction of global poverty, the elimination of extreme global poverty, and the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people worldwide, between 1990 and 2015, who live on less than $1 per day, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1302

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Global Poverty Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) More than one billion people worldwide live on less than $1 per day, and another 1.6 billion people struggle to survive on less than $2 per day, according to the World Bank.

(2) At the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, the United States joined more than 180 other countries in committing to work toward the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to improve life for the world's poorest people by 2015.

(3) The United Nations Millennium Development Goals include the goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people worldwide, between 1990 and 2015, that live on less than $1 per day, cutting in half the proportion of people suffering from hunger and unable to access safe drinking water and sanitation, reducing child mortality by two-thirds, ensuring basic education for all children, and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and malaria, while sustaining the environment upon which human life depends.

(4) On March 22, 2002, President George W. Bush stated: ''We fight against poverty because hope is an answer to terror. We fight against poverty because opportunity is a fundamental right to human dignity. We fight against poverty because faith requires it and conscience demands it. We fight against poverty with a growing conviction that major progress is within our reach.''.

(5) The 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States notes: ''[A] world where some live in comfort and plenty, while half of the human race lives on less than $2 per day, is neither just nor stable. Including all of the world's poor in an expanding circle of development and opportunity is a moral imperative and one of the top priorities of United States international policy.''.

(6) The 2006 National Security Strategy of the United States notes: ''America's national interests and moral values drive us in the same direction: to assist the world's poor citizens and least developed nations and help integrate them into the global economy.''.

(7) The bipartisan Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States recommends: ''A comprehensive United States strategy to counter terrorism should include economic policies that encourage development, more open societies, and opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and enhance prospects for their children.''.

(8) At the summit of the Group of Eight (G–8) nations in July 2005, leaders from all eight countries committed to increase aid to Africa from the current $25 billion annually to $50 billion by 2010, and to cancel 100 percent of the debt obligations owed to the World Bank, African Development Bank, and International Monetary Fund by 18 of the world's poorest nations.

(9) At the United Nations World Summit in September 2005, the United States joined more than 180 other governments in reiterating their commitment to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

(10) The United States has recognized the need for increased financial and technical assistance to countries burdened by extreme poverty, as well as the need for strengthened economic and trade opportunities for those countries, through significant initiatives in recent years, including the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003, the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and trade preference programs for developing countries, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

(11) In January 2006, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice initiated a restructuring of the United States foreign assistance program, including the creation of a Director of Foreign Assistance, who maintains authority over Department of State and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) foreign assistance funding and programs.

(12) In January 2007, the Department of State's Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance added poverty reduction as an explicit, central component of the overall goal of United States foreign assistance. The official goal of United States foreign assistance is: ''To help build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.''.

SEC. 3. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to promote the reduction of global poverty, the elimination of extreme global poverty, and the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people worldwide, between 1990 and 2015, who live on less than $1 per day.

SEC. 4. REQUIREMENT TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY.

(a) STRATEGY.—The President, acting through the Secretary of State, and in consultation with the heads of other appropriate departments and agencies of the Government of the United States, international organizations, international financial institutions, the governments of developing and developed countries, United States and international nongovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, and other appropriate entities, shall develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to further the United States foreign policy objective of promoting the reduction of global poverty, the elimination of extreme global poverty, and the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people worldwide, between 1990 and 2015, who live on less than $1 per day.

(b) CONTENTS.—The strategy required by subsection (a) shall include, but not be limited to, specific and measurable goals, efforts to be undertaken, benchmarks, and timetables to achieve the objectives described in subsection (a).

(c) COMPONENTS.—The strategy required by subsection (a) should include, but not be limited to, the following components:

(1) Continued investment in existing United States initiatives related to international poverty reduction, such as the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003, the Millennium Challenge Act of 2003, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and trade preference programs for developing countries, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

(2) Improving the effectiveness of development assistance and making available additional overall United States assistance levels as appropriate.

(3) Enhancing and expanding debt relief as appropriate.

(4) Leveraging United States trade policy where possible to enhance economic development prospects for developing countries.

(5) Coordinating efforts and working in cooperation with developed and developing countries, international organizations, and international financial institutions.

(6) Mobilizing and leveraging the participation of businesses, United States and international nongovernmental organizations, civil society, and public-private partnerships.

(7) Coordinating the goal of poverty reduction with other development goals, such as combating the spread of preventable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, increasing access to potable water and basic sanitation, reducing hunger and malnutrition, and improving access to and quality of education at all levels regardless of gender.

(8) Integrating principles of sustainable development into policies and programs.

(d) REPORTS.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President, acting through the Secretary of State, shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that describes the strategy required by subsection (a).

(2) SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.—Not less than once every two years after the submission of the initial report under paragraph (1) until and including 2015, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the status of the implementation of the strategy, progress made in achieving the global poverty reduction objectives described in subsection (a), and any changes to the strategy since the date of the submission of the last report.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

(2) EXTREME GLOBAL POVERTY.—The term ''extreme global poverty'' refers to the conditions in which individuals live on less than $1 per day, adjusted for purchasing power parity in 1993 United States dollars, according to World Bank statistics.

(3) GLOBAL POVERTY.—The term ''global poverty'' refers to the conditions in which individuals live on less than $2 per day, adjusted for purchasing power parity in 1993 United States dollars, according to World Bank statistics.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of the Global Poverty Act, and want to explain first what the bill does and then why it is so important. It declares the official U.S. policy to promote the reduction of global poverty, the elimination of extreme global poverty, and the achievement of the U.N. Millennium Development Goal of cutting extreme poverty

in half by 2015. It requires the President to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to carry out this policy. It includes guidelines for what the strategy should include, from aid, trade and debt relief, to working with the international community, businesses and NGOs to ensuring environmental sustainability.

It also requires that the President's strategy include specific and measurable goals, efforts to be undertaken, benchmarks and time tables. And, lastly, it requires that the President report back to Congress biannually on the progress made in the implementation of the global poverty strategy.

There are nearly 2.7 billion people in the world who are living on less than $2 a day. There are close to a billion who are living on less than a dollar a day. Arguably, there is no greater problem facing the globe right now than poverty and the vast number of people who suffer from it, the countries and communities who, every day, get up, simply wondering whether or not they and their children are going to live to see the end of that day. It causes instability, disease, and all kinds of problems from one end of the globe to the other.

But the other thing that is simply immoral is that there are this many people on that level of despair and on that level of poverty. And we in the United States have the power to at least try to help, and we are, in many, many ways.

I actually want to thank the President for the Millennium Challenge accounts, an effort to try to make sure that countries not just get foreign aid but use it wisely; the efforts to fund prevention of AIDS in Africa. The PEPFAR effort that's been going on for a number of years is a significant step forward.

We also have a large number of organizations and groups that are trying to combat global poverty. We have the world coming together in many ways as it never has before to try to combat this menace.

As mentioned, the U.N. set out their millennial development goals. The G8 set global poverty as its prime purpose a couple years ago. We have groups like the Gates Foundation and Results and Bread for the World and a large number of other organizations that are combating global poverty from every conceivable angle. And they are learning a lot as they do. They are learning what works, what moves forward, what doesn't work, what the best way to spend money is.

We are in the position, I believe, to consolidate those resources to get the maximum return on our effort to reduce global poverty. And I feel that the United States of America should be, not just a leader, but the leader in this effort.

And we have, as I mentioned, done a lot. But the one thing we haven't done is stated clearly and unequivocally that eliminating global poverty, or at least reducing it, is going to be a foremost goal of our foreign policy; and we have not implemented a comprehensive plan. It's great that there are so many different organizations working at this problem from a variety of different angles; but if we could bring that together, we could get more out of those resources. And I think the United States should coordinate that effort.

I want to thank a large number of people for helping make this happen. Certainly Chairman TOM LANTOS has been a tremendous leader on these issues and has been very helpful in this particular piece of legislation, as has the ranking member, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and the Republicans on the committee. This is a bipartisan effort. I want to thank Representative BACHUS, who I believe is going to speak, he and I were the original two sponsors on this bill, stepped up and helped.

I think this is something that we can come together on, and I think it is very, very important that the United States takes this leadership role. I believe if we do so we will be able to better combat global poverty, and I also think we will be better able to build alliances throughout the world and let the world know that the United States wants to use its power for the betterment of the entire world, not just ourselves. And we're willing to work with them on this problem that affects so many different countries throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the gentleman's bill, H.R. 1302, the Global Poverty Act of 2007. We certainly have serious needs and poverty right here in our own country. The suffering of the world's extremely poor, however, is beyond the imagining of most Americans.

Many Americans might be shocked to know just how many men, women and children around the world die each hour of every day simply because they are too poor to obtain food, shelter or basic medical care. While we quite often see the fatal impact of famines or natural disasters, we rarely see the images of the ongoing suffering caused by persistent hunger and chronic poverty.

The bill seeks to better organize the approaches to fighting poverty that are employed by the Agency for International Development and other agencies in our own government. It would seek to accomplish that by calling on the President to create an overall strategy for these efforts.

I note that the sponsor of the bill, my good friend, Mr. SMITH from Washington, agreed to an amendment adopted by our Foreign Affairs Committee that made two important changes. First, while referencing foreign aid and debt relief as components of a strategy to address global poverty, the bill now makes it clear that the strategy that the President would draw up would not have to be based on the assumption that the United States foreign aid and debt relief will always continue to rise.

The United States certainly has been generous in its provisions of foreign aid and debt relief. But no one can predict whether those two types of assistance will always rise.

Moreover, to address poverty comprehensively, the President may want to focus on expanding other types of interactions with countries suffering from widespread poverty, such as promoting trade, promoting investment, for example.

The bill, in the amended text before us today, Mr. Speaker, will allow the greater flexibility in deciding what might work best at a given time, in the particular circumstances, rather than insisting that he devise a strategy that assumes that more foreign aid and debt relief are always required.

Secondly, the bill, as amended, requires that the President submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the strategy once every 2 years, rather than once a year, as originally intended. And I appreciate the sponsor of the bill agreeing to that change. The change in the frequency of the reports, of the submission of the reports, Mr. Speaker, will enhance the substance of the periodic reports as significant statements on the progress being made under a global poverty reduction strategy.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that Mr. SMITH's bill will promote a greater focus on how we might best provide assistance to those in dire poverty overseas, while ensuring a realistic view of the resources and the means available to us to provide such assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I will reserve the balance of my time for purposes of closing.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, if I might, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), the ranking member of the Committee on Financial Services and an original cosponsor of the resolution before us.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me commend the chairman and the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. It's been a pleasure working with Congressman Adam Smith on this legislation, and I commend you, Adam.

This is a bipartisan bill with a goal that should bring all of us together. And that goal is the reduction of extreme poverty and to make that reduction of extreme poverty a foreign policy priority for the United States.

Today, in dozens of poor countries all over the world, little boys and girls are born into poverty, disease, and hunger. Hopelessness and despair are their daily companions. Their burdens are day-to-day; they're painful and they're heavy.

In debating debt relief, I quoted Sister Rebecca Trujillo. She was asked,

How do they make it? How do they get through the day? Her answer was: ''How do they survive? Since being in Nicaragua I have taken to answer in a matter of fact way. Often they do not. Often they do not survive the day.''

Each day, even on our bad days, and we're fond of saying we've had a really bad day, but we ought to be reminded that for billions of people throughout the world, that even on our worst days, we have more food, more shelter, more clothes, more security, more health care, more of everything than our poor brothers and sisters have on their best days.

And, finally, a lot of people said, well, the reality is overwhelming. Half the world lives on $2 a day. But we can make a difference and we can do so at a very small cost.

We've had successes. We have made a difference. Debt relief has been a success. It has improved the lives of millions of people for almost no monetary cost to this country. Since the Millennium Development Goals were set 7 years ago, the poverty rate in sub-Saharan Africa is down 6 percent. There are more children receiving health care, in fact, over a million more children in that area alone, and medical treatment. Vaccinations are up throughout Africa. The percentage of students enrolled in primary schools has gone up considerably.

So, in closing, let me simply say this: cost should never be the overriding consideration. But when we consider cost, and doing the right thing is the imperative, but when we consider the cost, let us realize that the cost of not acting is not only hopelessness and unrest throughout the world, but is also terrorism and confrontation and wars that can be avoided if these programs work.

□ 1230

Global poverty is in our economic interest. It is in our national security interest as well. This bill will focus our battle against global poverty, and it is a powerful statement that Americans are committed to making this world a better place for all.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank and again appreciate the efforts of my Republican colleagues and agree with their comments. A comprehensive strategy is what we are looking for here, and that is certainly trade, efforts at economic development, capacity-building to help countries figure out how to better use trade, microcredit. There are a lot of different strategies out there that can be employed. Certainly aid and debt relief are part of it but not the only part. In fact, the better part is when you can figure out how to make the economies work, how to make the governments work in these countries so that they can begin to develop their own economies and grow and lift themselves out of poverty in that manner. That is more sustainable and more long term. I personally believe that aid and debt relief will continue to be a significant part of the strategy for a while, but certainly the goal is also to be as comprehensive as possible and employ economic means to help lift people out of poverty as well.

I also think the other exciting thing about all this is the possibility of public-private partnerships, and I do not envision personally that the Federal Government or any federal government will wind up being the sole or even necessarily the leading organization in terms of driving the dollars out. We have a large number of groups, in my own neck of the woods, the Gates Foundation to the tune of over $30 billion, that are pumping money into a variety of different ideas to help alleviate global poverty. Nongovernmental organizations are making an enormous difference, and I would hope that the strategy would reflect that public-private partnership to maximize those resources.

And, lastly, I just want to agree with what Representative BACHUS said at the close there about how this does impact all of us. Instability leads to all manner of problems in the world, and poverty leads to instability more quickly than anything else. It is in our best interests to try to alleviate that instability and bring greater fairness, justice, and economic opportunities to the world. And I sincerely believe that this bill will have that effect, and I urge all Members of the body to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1302, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COUNTRIES HIT BY HURRICANES FELIX, DEAN, AND HENRIETTE

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 642) expressing sympathy to and support for the people and governments of the countries of Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico which have suffered from Hurricanes Felix, Dean, and Henriette and whose complete economic and fatality toll are still unknown.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 642

Whereas on September 4, 2007, Hurricane Felix, a Category 5 storm, hit the Nicaragua-Honduras border, causing over 40,000 people in Nicaragua and Honduras to be evacuated, and killing at least 100 people;

Whereas just weeks before, Hurricane Dean, a Category 5 storm, hit Mexico and the Caribbean coast, killed 27 persons, displaced over 260,000 persons, and destroyed over 36,000 homes;

Whereas Hurricane Henriette, a Category 1 storm, made landfall along the Baja California peninsula of Mexico hours after Hurricane Felix made landfall, the first time since 1949 that two Atlantic and Pacific hurricanes hit land on the same day;

Whereas for the first time in the recorded history of hurricanes, two Category 5 storms, Hurricanes Dean and Felix, made landfall during the same year;

Whereas Hurricane Henriette, though less powerful than Hurricane Felix, killed 7 people;

Whereas the homes of at least 5,000 Central Americans were damaged or destroyed by Hurricanes Felix and Henriette;

Whereas thousands more individuals were unable to be evacuated and forced to endure these hurricanes in the shelter of their own homes;

Whereas Hurricane Felix obtained wind speeds of over 160 miles-an-hour, causing widespread destruction with heavy rains and subsequent mudslides and floods expected to follow;

Whereas Hurricane Felix hit the Miskito Coast, home to the Miskito Indians, an indigenous population of Central America;

Whereas relief organizations have reported that thousands of Miskito Indians were stranded on the coast and unable to travel to safer regions;

Whereas the poorest civilians of Honduras and Guatemala who live in hillside villages will be most susceptible to mudslides due to their inland location;

Whereas Honduras and Nicaragua, the poorest countries of Central America, have economies that rely heavily on limited agricultural exports, which make both countries extremely vulnerable to natural disasters;

Whereas major tourist destinations, including Cabo San Lucas, the Mayan Riviera, Cancun, Acapulco, and a host of Caribbean islands, were forced to evacuate due to the hurricanes, thus harming the tourist industry on which these areas depend; and

Whereas Honduras and Nicaragua were still rebuilding after the devastating effects of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, which killed nearly 11,000 people and left more than 8,000 people missing, destroyed the infrastructures and economies of both countries, and caused billions of dollars in damage: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its sympathy to and support for the people and governments of the countries of Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico in this time of devastation;

(2) vows its continued friendship and support for our neighbors in Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico;

(3) urges all parties to continue their efforts in evacuating and providing aid to those individuals displaced by the hurricanes;

(4) recognizes the United States Government's initial efforts to provide assistance to populations affected by the hurricanes and urges increased and continued assistance as the effects of the hurricanes continue to unfold;

(5) encourages public institutions, specialized agencies, as well as private citizens, to offer their resources; and