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House of Representatives

Supporting the Iran Sanctions Extension Act

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey... Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chair for his sponsorship of the Iran Sanctions Extension Act, H.R. 6297. This is a must-pass measure that would extend for 10 years the Iran Sanctions Act, a critical set of sanctions targeting Iran's energy sector that would otherwise expire on December 31st.

As we all know, the administration lifted the vast majority of the act's sanctions following the purported implementation of the egregiously flawed Iran nuclear deal in January, but these restrictions on investment in Iran's nuclear sector would form the backbone of the so-called snapback sanctions that the U.S. could impose in response to Iranian violations of the agreement.

Mr. Speaker, let's not kid ourselves, the Iran nuclear agreement is a mess. There is no anytime/anywhere inspections protocol. Today Iran is massively expanding both the number and the capability of its ballistic missile arsenal. Iran remains the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Now flush with billions of new funding, they are on a weapons procurement frenzy and are acquiring weapons of many kinds, including SAM missiles.

There is cheating on a number of fronts. Under the Iranian deal, it is a matter of when,

not if, but when will Iran become a nuclear state.

This is a minimal policy that will at least snap back and say: when you violate the terms and conditions of the agreement—which I find flawed and many others do as well—that, at least, there is a snapback, and those sanctions will be kicked into place. If they don't exist, it is not going to happen.

So for 20 years, we all know sanctions have played a critical role in mitigating Iran's destabilizing weapons program and state sponsorship of terrorism. By imposing sanctions on entities anywhere in the world that invested in Iran's nuclear sector, the Iran Sanctions Act for years targeted a key source of revenue that the Iranian Government used to finance its activities.

So again, I think this is an important bill, and I hope that the Senate will take it up quickly after House passage.

Again, I thank Chairman ROYCE and ELIOT ENGEL for their leadership. This is a bipartisan piece of legislation. It is the barest minimum that we can do in the face of such a flawed agreement.