

H.R. 5931: Prohibiting Future Ransom Payments to Iran Act
SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY

Section 1. Short Title. The “Prohibiting Future Ransom Payments to Iran Act.”

Section 2. Findings. Cites concerns that the Obama Administration violated longstanding U.S. policy by releasing prisoners and paying ransom for the return of Americans held hostage by Iran, a designated state sponsor of terrorism and primary money laundering concern.

Section 3. Statement of Policy. States that it remains U.S. policy not to pay ransom or release prisoners in order to obtain the release of U.S. citizens taken hostage abroad.

Section 4. Prohibition on Cash Payments to the Government of Iran. Prohibits the U.S. government from making any direct or indirect payments to Iran in U.S. or foreign currency, as well as cash-like forms of exchange, such as bearer bonds.

Provides for greater transparency by requiring that any payment to fulfill claims brought before the Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal be made in accordance with the prohibition on cash payments, and be made pursuant to a specific license by the Department of Treasury, with the payment amount and method published in the Federal Register.

Maintains these restrictions until Iran is no longer designated as a state sponsor of terrorism or primary money laundering concern.

Section 5. Report on Outstanding Claims before the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal. Requires the Administration to regularly report to Congress on the status of any claims pending before the Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal, including the likelihood that the claims will be resolved.

Sec. 6. Notification and Certification Relating to Settlements of Outstanding Claims before the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal. Requires the President to notify Congress at least 30 days before making a payment to Iran to settle a claim brought before the tribunal.

The notification must include: (1) the total amount of the payment and how any interest on the payment was calculated, (2) a legal analysis of why the settlement was agreed to, (3) a certification that the payment is not a ransom to secure the release of hostages held by Iran, (4) an identification of the Iranian government entity that will receive the payment, (5) a certification that the payment will not support foreign terrorist organizations or the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and (6) whether an equal amount of Iranian funds are available in the U.S. to satisfy judgments against Iran by victims of Iranian-sponsored terrorism.

Section 7. Exclusion of Certain Activities. Ensures that this Act does not negatively impact the work of U.S. intelligence agencies.

Section 8. Rules of Construction. Clarifies that nothing in this Act should be construed to authorize any payment by the Government of the United States to the Government of Iran.

Section 9. Definitions. Defines “Government of Iran” and “Iran-United States Claims Tribunal.”