

**Thursday, May 29, 2014
10 AM -- 2172 RHOB**

**Congressman Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11th)
CFA Full Committee Markup
H.R. 1771 – the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act of 2014**

I would like to thank Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel for bringing H.R. 1771, the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act of 2014, to the Full Committee for markup. This legislation, which I am pleased to cosponsor, provides us with the opportunity to communicate that our Committee and the Congress is resolved to hold North Korea accountable for its brutality against its people and the erratic and dangerous manner in which it conducts itself on the world stage.

This comprehensive sanctions legislation addresses money laundering, currency counterfeiting, the violation of UN Security Council resolutions and financial restrictions, and various other offenses committed by North Korea. It also addresses human rights abuses and promotes unrestricted communications to the citizens of North Korea.

The sanctions are warranted, as North Korea is a reckless international actor that has amassed a litany of violations and abuses of international law. It continues to develop a nuclear weapons program in defiance of the United National Security Council and worldwide condemnation. North Korea supports the development of Iranian missile technology and nuclear capabilities. Hamas and Hezbollah, both designated foreign terrorist organizations by the United States, receive missile technology and training from North Korea that they have used to attack Israel, an ally of the United States. United Nations Security Council resolutions deterring missile tests and launches are routinely flouted. It is clear that a pattern of behavior has developed in North Korea that should be concerning to all in the international community.

In addition to the legislation before us today, I also am an original cosponsor of H.R. 673, the North Korea Sanctions and Diplomatic Nonrecognition Act of 2013. H.R. 673 calls on the Secretary of State to redesignate North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism and to continue to withhold formal diplomatic recognition of the Kim Jong Un regime. Both pieces of legislation send a strong and clear message to North Korea that its international transgressions are not without consequence. The United States will not and cannot allow an authoritarian regime to operate with impunity and threaten our national security and the security of our allies.

Of course, the United States and international community should not only address the aggression North Korea has projected outward. The atrocities committed inside the borders of North Korea are equally disturbing and deserving of condemnation. The status of human rights seems to have

regressed under Kim Jong Un. A recent United Nations report recounts, in horrifying detail, the “offenses” which land individuals in labor camps; including misspelling the name of Kim Jong Il. Deplorable conditions persist in the nation’s system of gulags that reports say contain 200,000 prisoners. People seeking refuge from the oppressive regime must disregard public executions used to intimidate the populace and brave a “shoot to kill” threat levied against citizens attempting to cross the border with China.

Family reunifications between South Korean families and their loved ones behind the DMZ remain limited to fleeting reunions. I thank the Chairman and Committee staff for working with me on an amendment that makes the suspension of sanctions in this legislation conditional on North Korea making significant progress in planning for unrestricted family reunification meetings, including for those individuals among the two-million strong Korean-American community who maintain family ties with relatives in North Korea.

Pyongyang must pay, and the lives of North Koreans must be improved. I applaud this legislation for levying extensive sanctions against bad actors in the North Korean saga, while recognizing the urgency of humanitarian, medical and food assistance for North Korean citizens. Rest assured that no such reprieve is offered by Pyongyang. Again, I commend my colleagues for finding common ground on North Korea sanctions and for taking decisive action against this despotic regime.