

## Assembly Joint Resolution No. 37

### RESOLUTION CHAPTER 92

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 37—Relative to human rights violations and political oppression in Vietnam.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 18, 1995.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 37, Conroy. Vietnam.

This measure would declare the support of the Legislature for the struggle of the Vietnamese people for freedom and democracy, would call for an end to political repression and for respect for human and civil rights in Vietnam, and would urge the United States government to make the extension of Most Favored Nation status contingent upon satisfaction of specified conditions.

WHEREAS, The government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) is continuing to violate all fundamental and civil rights of its own citizens through arbitrary arrests, detentions without trial, and the censorship of peaceful expressions of political or religious beliefs; and

WHEREAS, In 1991 and 1992, Amnesty International had reported that there were still thousands of political prisoners detained in hundreds of government-operated reeducation camps, and Amnesty International estimates that at least one reeducation camp exists in each of Vietnam's 40 provinces and continues to receive "persistent reports of torture and ill-treatment of people" within those camps; and

WHEREAS, The Asia Watch has raised the issue of political detainees in the SRV having to perform hard labor under conditions of malnutrition, abuse, and lack of medical care, and the periods of detention are indefinitely renewable; and

WHEREAS, As a part of the Campaign for the Release of Political Prisoners in Vietnam, the National United Front for the Liberation of Vietnam released a list of political prisoners, including writers, journalists, religious leaders, intellectuals, civil servants, and politicians; this list provides the names of prisoners, their prison location, and the penalty under which they are serving; and there are currently 1,005 prisoners on this list; and

WHEREAS, For decades hundreds of religious leaders and followers have been imprisoned and scores of religious leaders have been killed and since the summer of 1993, there has been a brutal crackdown on religion by the government of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, In the SRV, the Vietnamese people are constantly subjected to police surveillance and restricted social and political activities; in other words, the Vietnamese people are being denied normal civil rights and entitlements; and

WHEREAS, Political oppression and human rights violations in Vietnam continue to increase at an alarming rate in contrast to the government's recent publicity maneuvers, such as "economic reforms," a "revised Constitution," or an "open door policy"; and

WHEREAS, After two decades, the government of the SRV is still committing the inhumane act of warehousing the remains of American soldiers to be used as bargaining chips; and

WHEREAS, For two decades, the government of the SRV has been and is still less than forthright about the fate of American POWs and MIAs; and

WHEREAS, The Government of the United States should require specific improvements of human rights and civil rights by the Vietnamese government as conditions in all business, investment, aid, and diplomatic discussions with Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, The government of Vietnam has reacted to the United States decision to normalize diplomatic relations with a refusal to institute democratic reforms and a rejection of calls for an end to human rights violations; and

WHEREAS, April 30, 1995, marked the 20th anniversary of the fall of Saigon to the Communist government of North Vietnam; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly and Senate of the State of California, jointly,* That the Legislature hereby declares its support for the struggle of the Vietnamese people for freedom and democracy, calls for an end to political oppression and for respect of human and civil rights in Vietnam, and urges the Government of the United States to use its new diplomatic relations with Vietnam to insist on democratic political reforms, an end to human rights violations, and a full accounting of American POWs and MIAs and to make the extension of Most Favored Nation status, contingent upon (1) the unconditional release of all political and religious prisoners in Vietnam, (2) the immediate cessation of punishment of critics through detention without trial, (3) the abolition of all political prisons and reeducation camps throughout the country, (4) the elimination of all regulations, codes, and constitutional provisions prohibiting organized opposition activity that are commonly used to repress peaceful expression of dissent, (5) a formal commitment by the leaders of the Communist Party of Vietnam to create a pluralistic and democratic environment, with free and open national elections under international supervision, so that the citizens of Vietnam may determine the future leadership and orientation of their government, (6) the immediate and unconditional return of the remains of all United States soldiers still in the possession of the



government of the SRV, and (7) full and forthright cooperation in resolving the fate of all American POWs and MIAs in Southeast Asia; and be it further

*Resolved,* That corporations doing business with Vietnam are encouraged to seek improvement in labor practices, as well as human rights and civil rights in all business negotiations and transactions; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

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