

107<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 318

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding democratic reform and the protection of human rights in Laos.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 7, 2002

Mr. KIND (for himself, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin, and Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding democratic reform and the protection of human rights in Laos.

Whereas Laos has been under the authoritarian control of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party since the overthrow of the Royal Lao Government in 1975;

Whereas the Lao Constitution purports to guarantee the people of Laos a wide range of freedoms, including the freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion;

Whereas the only political party allowed by law in Laos is the communist Lao People's Revolutionary Party;

Whereas all candidates for public office in Laos must be approved by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party;

Whereas political dissent is not allowed in Laos and is often severely punished;

Whereas the Government of Laos does not protect the basic human rights of its citizens;

Whereas the United States Department of State reported in its most recent Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Laos that the Government of Laos restricts the people of Laos from practicing the freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion, and from undertaking activities to change their government;

Whereas elections for the Lao National Assembly are scheduled for February 24, 2002;

Whereas without a democratic electoral system that provides for openly contested, free, and fair elections by secret ballot, the upcoming elections in Laos will not fairly represent the will of the Lao people; and

Whereas the United States has a vital interest in the worldwide promotion of democratic principles and supports democratic reform in Laos: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
 2 *concurring)*, That Congress urges the Government of Laos  
 3 to—

4            (1) ensure that all adult citizens of Laos are  
 5            able to vote and run for public office regardless of  
 6            their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, economic  
 7            standing, or political affiliation;

8            (2) allow the citizens of Laos to assemble and  
 9            peacefully protest against the Lao Government and

- 1 public officials and to organize themselves into polit-
- 2 ical parties; and
- 3 (3) allow unrestricted access by international
- 4 human rights and election monitors.

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