Mr. Speaker, it is none too soon that the House is considering

what I hope will be the first of several pieces

of legislation to sanction Iran for its illegal nuclear program.

Despite Iran’s agreement on October 1 to

allow IAEA inspectors to visit its newly disclosed

nuclear site near Qom, the regime continues

to enrich uranium. Iran grows more and

more dangerous each day enrichment is allowed

to continue. A nuclear-armed Iran is an

existential threat to Israel; would threaten the

safety of American troops in the region; would

likely embolden terrorist groups Hamas and

Hezbollah; and could lead to a dangerous nuclear

arms race in the Middle East. We must

not allow this to happen.

I strongly support the legislation before us

today. H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling

Act, would allow state and local governments

to divest the assets of their pension funds and

any other funds under their control from companies

investing $20 million or more in Iran’s

energy sector. By allowing states and local

governments to withdraw their investments in

companies doing business in Iran, we can increase

pressure on the Iranian regime to

change course and abandon its pursuit of nuclear

weapons. Only when Iran feels pressured,

is it likely to make concessions.

Unfortunately, the leaders of Iran seem to

feel fairly secure despite all the talk of tough

sanctions. On Friday, October 9, Ayatollah

Ahmad Khatami, a member of Iran’s Assembly

of Experts, said the October 1 talks between

Iran, the U.S. and other world powers were a

‘‘great victory’’ for Iran, suggesting Iran had

been successful in putting off any sanctions.

By passing this legislation today, though,

Congress can send Iran a clear and powerful

message. While the President and other world

leaders gauge whether Iran is truly serious

about complying with its obligations, Congress

will back the negotiations with sanctions to

show Iran that it must act in good faith and not

delay as it usually does.

Passage of this legislation is important, but

it is only the beginning of what needs to be

done to address the Iranian nuclear threat.

Congress must pass additional legislation, including

H.R. 2194, the Iran Refined Petroleum

Sanctions Act, to put sufficient pressure on

Iran to fully suspend all enrichment and work

on its nuclear program.

No government that calls for the complete

destruction of another should be allowed to

have nuclear weapons. The Iran Sanctions

Enabling Act is a first step to take in order to

prevent Iran’s leaders from acquiring the

means to do what they say they will.