We have seen throughout history the

power of one simple idea: When given a

choice, people will choose freedom. As we

have witnessed over the past few days, the

people of Iran want the same freedoms,

human rights, and opportunities as people

around the world. Their Government should

listen to their hopes.

In the last two Iranian Presidential elections

and in nearly a dozen parliamentary and

local elections, the vast majority of the Iranian

people voted for political and economic

reform. Yet their voices are not being listened

to by the unelected people who are

the real rulers of Iran. Uncompromising, destructive

policies have persisted, and far too

little has changed in the daily lives of the

Iranian people. Iranian students, journalists,

and Parliamentarians are still arrested, intimidated,

and abused for advocating reform

or criticizing the ruling regime. Independent

publications are suppressed. And talented

students and professionals, faced with the

dual specter of too few jobs and too many

restrictions on their freedom, continue to

seek opportunities abroad rather than help

build Iran’s future at home. Meanwhile,

members of the ruling regime and their families

continue to obstruct reform while reaping

unfair benefits.

Iran is an ancient land, home to a proud

culture with a rich heritage of learning and

progress. The future of Iran will be decided

by the people of Iran. Right now, the Iranian

people are struggling with difficult questions

about how to build a modern 21st-century

society that is at once Muslim, prosperous,

and free. There is a long history of friendship

between the American people and the people

of Iran. As Iran’s people move towards

a future defined by greater freedom, greater

tolerance, they will have no better friend

than the United States of America.