Mr. President, I

rise to speak in relation to the Comprehensive

Iran Sanctions, Accountability

and Divestment Act of 2010 and

to congratulate my colleagues on its

unanimous passage. This legislation is

vital not only to sanction Iran for bad

behavior but to signal to the Government

of Iran our determination to keep

them from developing or acquiring nuclear

weapons and from supporting terrorism

throughout the Middle East region

and around the world.

It did not have to be this way. Iran

has been given every opportunity to

change its ways and has chosen not to

do so. Iran represents one of the biggest

threats to our security, and these

sanctions should help restrict Iran’s

ability to operate.

Specifically, this legislation will expand

sanctions on foreign companies

that do business in Iran. It will ban

U.S. banks from conducting financial

transactions with foreign banks that

are connected to the Iranian nuclear

program or Iran’s terrorist enterprises.

It imposes a variety of new financial

sanctions on Iran, limiting the

mullahs’ access to the international

banking system. And, among other provisions,

provides a framework for U.S.,

state, and local governments to divest

their portfolios of foreign companies

that work in the Iranian energy sector.

In the past, the United States has not

fully utilized its sanctions authority

when it comes to Iran. Obviously, enforcement

is crucial. Sanctions are

only effective when they are actually

applied. I urge the administration, in

the strongest terms possible, to make

full use of the sanctions Congress has

authorized in this bill.

It is no secret that Iran is openly

hostile to the United States and our

important allies, and failing to act

would be foolish and irresponsible. The

Government of Iran has rejected every

opportunity to develop good relations

with the rest of the world and sanctions

are a logical and necessary response.

We must send a strong, unified message

to Tehran and to those who aid

their tyrannical ambitions. Terrorism,

oppression, and subjugation ought not

have any place in society. This legislation

imposes financial sanctions and

travel restrictions on human rights

abusers in Iran. Passage of this legislation

helps demonstrate that we reject

the repression of the rulers in Tehran

and support the efforts of the Iranian

people to change their government.

And, I hope that the people of Iran

will understand that is our goal here.

We support the people of Iran. We support

their right to chose their own

leaders and chart their own future. We

stand with them against the tyranny of

the mullahs.

Iranians have a long and proud history,

and are some of the most passionate

and courageous people I have

met. They are just as opposed to the

actions of the Iranian regime as we are.

In fact, a little over a year ago, the

people of Iran went to the polls to vote

for a leader and saw their hopes for a

democratically elected leader brutally

crushed by a regime unwilling to cede

its power. People around the world

stood breathlessly, hoping the brave

men and women of the Green Revolution

would see their efforts rewarded.

Instead of listening to the people of

Iran, Ahmadinejad and his cronies

killed, imprisoned, and tortured those

who were brave enough to speak out in

opposition to tyranny.

Unfortunately, this violent course of

action is not a recently developed tactic.

To this day, there are members of

the Green Revolution sitting in prison.

Christians are killed for worshiping the

God of their choosing, the free press

has been silenced, women are brutally

oppressed. The human rights abuses of

Iran are extensive.

These sanctions are necessary because

of the terrible nature of the regime.

The rulers in Tehran have demonstrated

that they cannot be trusted.

They have subverted the interests of

the Iranian people. They have manipulated

the political process.

We in the United States of America

have a duty to stand with the thousands

of men and women in Iran who

long for the basic rights that we in

America take for granted. Freedom of

speech, freedom of assembly, freedom

of religion, freedom of the press. These

are the things the Iranian people long

for, and these are the things I am confident

they will one day enjoy.

Obviously, freedom for the Iranian

people will require much more than

legislation from the U.S. Congress, but

we ought to do what we can, and this

bill sends a strong signal at a key time

for our efforts to halt Iran’s nuclear

program and for the people of Iran who

seek a more representative government.

I hope we take additional steps

to support the Iranian people’s free and

unfettered access to the internet, boost

their ability to receive unbiased news

and information and provide the support

and assistance they need to sustain

the reform movement in the face

of a hostile and repressive government.

Senator CORNYN and I have introduced

the Iran Democratic Transition

Act, which supports the transition to a

freely elected democratic government

in Iran by assisting eligible Iranian

democratic opposition organizations

with communications and distribution

of information. It is an important bill

to aid the courageous people of Iran,

and it is my hope that in the coming

weeks the Senate will be able to bring

this bill to the floor for a vote.

Today is a great step forward. I look

forward to working with my colleagues

on other ways that we can strengthen

opposition to the regime, halt the development

of nuclear weapons, and support

the Iranian people’s drive for freedom.