

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2583:
The Hezbollah Anti-Terrorism Amendment
Offered by Ranking Member Howard L. Berman

SUMMARY:

Hezbollah's emergence as kingmaker in the Lebanese government is cause for great concern. United States security interests require that we provide assistance to support our friends and interests in Lebanon. However, American taxpayer dollars cannot be allowed to benefit the Hezbollah terrorist organization in any way - economically or politically. Therefore, Ranking Member Berman has introduced an amendment that leaves ample scope for promoting our interests while denying Hezbollah any benefit. The amendment, based on his legislation entitled the Hezbollah Anti-Terrorism Act, H.R. 2215 (HATA), denies assistance to the government of Lebanon when Hezbollah is part of a ruling coalition, while allowing for important exceptions, and providing a Presidential national security waiver.

THIS AMENDMENT WOULD:

- Distinguish between pro-US-led Lebanese governments and Hezbollah-dependent governments.
- Prohibit U.S. foreign assistance to a Hezbollah-dependent Lebanese government, i.e., a government in which Hezbollah is part of the majority coalition.
- Allow the United States to continue to support humanitarian, democratization, disarmament, IMET, and education programs without requiring the use of a strict Presidential waiver.
- Provide the President the waiver authority to support necessary American national security initiatives in Lebanon, as well as our friends in Lebanon, while keeping U.S. funds out of the hands of Hezbollah.

WHY THIS AMENDMENT IS NECESSARY:

- In January 2011, the opposition Hezbollah party resigned from pro-Western Saad Hariri's unity cabinet forcing the collapse of the Lebanese government. Hezbollah soon installed their hand-picked choice for Prime Minister and took control of the Lebanese government.
- The base text makes no distinction between pro-US-led Lebanese governments and Hezbollah-dependent governments, and effectively cuts off aid to any currently conceivable Lebanese government.
- The base text of the bill essentially makes it impossible for the United States to provide assistance to our friends in Lebanon.