

## Rothman Insists Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice Explain Anti-Gay UN Vote

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### Rothman Insists Secretary of State Explain Anti-Gay UN Vote

Expresses Anger, Disappointment at U.S. Alignment with Iran against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Human Rights Groups

(Washington, DC)—Today, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) led a group of U.S. Representatives in denouncing the United States' recent vote of support for a hateful, Iran-sponsored, anti-gay resolution at the United Nations (UN). In an open letter to Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, Rothman and 44 other lawmakers insist that she clarify the U.S. position and publicly repudiate the vote.

"It is clear to us that the United States' human rights diplomacy must encompass the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. We therefore request a detailed explanation of the administration's rationale behind the decision to drastically depart from its own past support of advocacy work on behalf of the LGBT communities within the United Nations," Rothman and his colleagues wrote to Secretary Rice. "It is imperative that the United States reaffirms its international human rights commitments regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation."

The Iran-backed decree that gained U.S. support this year sought to punish several organizations that support human rights for LGBT people by blocking their application for "consultative status with the UN," a special status that allows them to participate in UN decisions. This year's vote was a dramatic reversal from 2002, when the U.S. instead voted to allow applications from some of the very same human rights organizations to move forward.

"It is deplorable that the United States would suddenly align itself with countries such as Iran, which the State Department acknowledges will severely punish same-sex conduct and has even imposed the death penalty on gay men simply because of their sexual orientation," said Rothman.

In voting for Iran's resolution, the U.S. also aligned itself with Cameroon, China, Cuba, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, where President Robert Mugabe has publicly blamed homosexuals for "Africa's ills." All of these countries have deplorable human rights records.

"As a person of faith, I feel moved to stand up for the human rights of all people around the world, including people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. I hope that Secretary Rice shares that value and will respond to our letter immediately to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to human rights," said Rothman.

U.S. Representatives Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Eliot Engel (D-NY), and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) joined Rothman in leading this effort and sending the Congressional group letter to Secretary Rice.

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