

Legislative Bulletin.....February 10, 2014

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H.Res. 447 - Supporting the democratic and European aspirations of the people of Ukraine and their right to choose their own future free of intimidation and fear, as amended (*Engel, D-NY*)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to be considered on February 10, 2014, under a motion to suspend the rule and pass the bill, which requires a two-thirds vote for passage.

Summary: H.Res. 447 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- “Greatly values the warm and close relationship the United States has established with Ukraine since that country regained its independence in 1991;
- “Supports the democratic and European aspirations of the people of Ukraine, and their right to choose their own future free of intimidation and fear;
- “Calls on the United States and the European Union to continue to work together to support a peaceful resolution to the crisis, and to continue to support the desire of millions of Ukrainian citizens for democracy, human rights, government accountability, and the rule of law, and closer relations with Europe;
- “Urges the Government of Ukraine, Ukrainian opposition parties, and all protesters to exercise the utmost restraint and avoid confrontation, and calls on the Government of Ukraine to live up to its international obligations and respect and uphold the democratic rights of its citizens, including the freedom of assembly and expression, as well as the freedom of the press;
- “Condemns all acts of violence and calls on the Government of Ukraine to bring to justice those responsible for violence and brutality against peaceful protesters, and to release and drop any criminal charges against those detained for peacefully exercising their democratic rights;
- “Welcomes the repeal by the Ukrainian parliament of most of the anti-democratic measures adopted on January 16, 2014, and urges President Yanukovich to continue to engage in substantive talks with opposition leaders to address the legitimate grievances of the opposition, and to take additional steps to de-escalate tensions;
- “Urges the United States and the European Union to continue to make clear to Ukraine’s leaders that those who authorize or engage in violence against peaceful protesters will be held personally accountable;

- “Supports the measures taken by the Department of State to revoke the visas of several Ukrainians linked to the violence, and encourages the Administration to consider additional targeted sanctions against those who authorize or engage in the use of force; and
- “Urges all parties to engage in constructive, sustained dialogue in order to find a peaceful solution to Ukraine’s current political and economic crisis.”

The resolution includes several findings, including:

- “On December 11, 2013, police raided 3 opposition media outlets and the headquarters of an opposition party;
- “Several journalists, including from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and civic activists supporting the demonstrators have been brutally attacked;
- “On January 16, 2014, the Ukrainian parliament passed, and President Yanukovich signed, legislation which severely limits the right of peaceful protest, constrains freedom of speech and the independent media, and unduly restricts civil society organizations.”

Additional Information: Ukrainian protests began in late November, 2013, after President Viktor Yanukovich’s cabinet announced they were abandoning plans to strengthen ties with the European Union. The Ukrainian government was considering moving towards closer cooperation with the E.U, despite Russian opposition. On December 17, 2013, Russian President Putin announced that Russia would purchase \$15 billion in Ukrainian government bonds, which Russia announced would decrease the price Ukrainians would have to pay for Russian natural gas. A timeline of protests can be [found here](#).

Committee Action: H.Res. 447 was introduced on December 16, 2013, and was referred to the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats. A full committee [markup was held](#) on January 29, 2014, and the legislation was agreed to by voice vote, as amended.

Administration Position: No Statement of Administration Policy is available.

Cost to Taxpayers: An estimate from CBO is unavailable, however the legislation does not contain an authorization for appropriations.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?: No.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: A report from CBO is unavailable.

Does the Bill Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?: The legislation does not contain earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits.

Constitutional Authority: House rules do not require a statement of constitutional authority for House Resolutions.

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H.R. 2431- The National Integrated Drought Information Systems Reauthorization Act of 2013 – (Hall, R-TX)

Order of Business: [H.R. 2431](#) is scheduled to be considered on Monday, 2014, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, which requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

Summary: This bill reauthorizes the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) through 2018. The NIDIS provides a drought early warning system for droughts and requires the collection and dissemination of drought and weather data. The bill also requires the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to report to Congress on the implementation of the program.

Additional Background: The House passed the [National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006](#) on September 26, 2006, by voice vote. More information can be found on the [NIDIS website](#).

Committee Action: The bill was introduced on June 19, 2013, and referred to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. On December 5, 2013, the Committee favorably reported the legislation by [voice vote](#).

Administration Position: No statement of administration position was available at this time.

Cost to Taxpayers: According to the Congressional Budget Office [cost estimate](#) “implementing the legislation would cost \$60 million over the 2014-2018 period and \$8 million after 2018.”

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?: No.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?: No.

Does the Bill Contain Any Federal Encroachment into State or Local Authority in Potential Violation of the 10th Amendment?: No.

Does the Bill Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?: No

Does the Bill Contain Any Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?: No.

Constitutional Authority: According to the sponsor, “Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8, Clause 3--To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes; and Article I, Section 8, Clause 18--To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.” Congressman Hall’s statement in the Congressional Record can be viewed [here](#).

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