

## **Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC)**

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Greetings to my Iranian American friends and people from across the world who are participating in the “2021 Free Iran Online Conference.” I am Joe Wilson, a member of congress from South Carolina’s Second Congressional District.

As a member of House Foreign Affairs Committee, I am deeply concerned about the Iranian regime’s malign activities and murderous agenda. Year after year, the Iranian regime is a serial perpetrator of gross human rights abuses and remains the number one state-sponsor of international terrorism.

The world is right to be concerned about the Iranian regime’s nuclear weapons program, but it is also critical that we acknowledge that Iran’s mullahs also rely on terrorism against the citizens of Iran and terrorism against the international community to survive. It is no longer a secret that they use terrorism as a leverage in their international dealings and have been using diplomats to plan terrorist activities. And certainly, indiscriminate killing of innocent people who are demanding their basic rights inside Iran, speaks to the brutality but also the weakness of the regime. Which betrays the extraordinary cultural heritage of the talented citizens of Iran.

My friends, I join you and my colleagues in United States Congress in reminding the world that Iranian people want a secular, democratic and non-nuclear republic. This is the message of Iran’s vibrant resistance units and the message of House Resolution 118, of which I am a proud cosponsor. I was also grateful to introduce H.R. 2117, the Iran Human Rights and Accountability Act, this Congress. This legislation would hold top prison heads and IRGC officials accountable for their arbitrary detainment and abuse of Iranian citizens. The goal of improving human rights for Iranian citizens has never been more urgent given the murderous history of Hassan Rouhani’s successor, Ebrahim Raisi.

Thank you for your engagement and thank you Madam Rajavi, for your leadership, and thank you for your dedication to establish a secular, democratic, nonnuclear republic Iran.