

Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN)

There are so many faces here, people I've met through the years and seen at these activities. Nice to see you again. And I appreciate the comments of Sheila Jackson Lee. She's a brilliant orator and she's a freedom fighter and I concur with her remarks, but we all need to be with Speaker Pelosi as she makes her announcement soon.

I am a cochair of the Congressional Human Rights and Democracy Congress and the cochair of the Helsinki Commission, and I was appointed this year as a special representative of the OSCE on Political Prisoners. So these issues are very dear to my heart. Freedom is so important to all of us, and the idea of the Iranians losing their country as they have and the Ukrainians who are potentially losing their country within the lines that the Russians took suffered greatly. You can't watch the news and see the protests led by the women of Iran and the brutality against them and the killings and the beatings and not have sympathy and have concern and almost come to tears.

Freedom is so important and the young women and others in Iran are showing that they will stand for it. They will resist, they have resisted, they are heroes, and I admire them greatly and I feel for them.

And I heard the other day about the one person being sentenced to death. There might be others sentenced to death. We cannot allow that to happen. I express my desire for the Iranian people and their desire to have a democratic, secular, and nonnuclear Iran. Iran as a nuclear entity threatens the world. With any weapons they have, they threaten Ukraine, they threaten freedom all over the globe, not just in Iran. So we need to see to it that Iran changes and changes for the better and people have freedom, liberty, and justice. Thank you very much.