

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee: How beautiful it is.

Congresswoman Judy Chu: And I'm Congress member Judy Chu from Los Angeles, and I'm just here to say I support your cause and we'll let Sheila Jackson Lee speak for us.

Congressman Steve Cohen: And I'm Steve Cohen from Memphis. Sheila, you're on.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee: Well, I think the most important thing is when you see these outstanding members, Judy Chu, Steve Cohen, and you've seen others, we know that the freedom of Iran is on the lips of every single member of Congress. It is not a partisan issue. We demand democracy. We stand as democrats. We stand with the President of the United States. Joe Biden is not going to let freedom be denied in Iran. You've got to stand up on that. We are fighting together. We are fighting together, and we seek the freedom of all those in Iran.

None of us wanted to leave this moment in spite of a called meeting by the Speaker of the House. And if anyone knows Nancy Pelosi, she is our freedom fighter and does not take anything when it comes to fighting for the survival of our people and the people of Iran. I am reminded as I came in, my good friend said, "When President Rajavi was arrested, Sheila Jackson Lee was in the room with you and never stood away from viewing her as the legitimate president of Iran." **I never ran away from MEK. I never stepped away from MEK. And the democrats never stepped away from MEK. Freedom fighters. People who have experienced the loss and seen the bloodshed.**

As I drove in this morning, as Steve Cohen drove in, as Judy Chu drove in, we could not miss the accounting of those innocent heroes on the lawn who had lost their life to the brutality of the mullahs and each succeeding leader while the brave Madame Rajavi, the President of Iran, stood in Paris holding up the bloodstained banner but saying, "I will never give up."

I want to humbly comment this moment that I have to speak softly about the pain of mothers who came and hugged me when we had those pictures on the lawn between the Washington Monument and the United States Capitol. How potent. Symbols of freedom in spite of January 6th. Symbols of freedom. Both Steve Cohen and myself on the Judiciary Committee, it is our responsibility to be the holders of democracy. But the mix, Mrs. Rajavi of those two symbols, I again went to walk through and look and bow at innocent persons, prisoners. But way back, I hugged the mothers more than a decade ago who were crying for where their children were. Why were they slaughtered? Simply because they took a stand. Camp Ashraf where.....and I continue to fight for the freedom of those people and for them not to be attacked in the midst of That was on our lips over and over again with President Rajavi who came to remind us of the values of freedom.

I do not come here to appoint and point to any divide amongst those of us who are Americans, those of us who embrace Iranian Americans. There is no doubt that the diaspora of doctors and teachers and lawyers, businesspersons, have been a cornerstone of America's freedom, even those Iranian Americans who put on the U.S. uniform so that they could fight for our freedom. Today we should come and proclaim that as we can see the picture, I can feel the pain of the mothers, the fathers who have seen and heard that there was no finding of their loved ones. Today I stand with hostages who are U.S. citizens who are in Iran who cannot now be united with their families. I stand with a beautiful young woman, Miss Amini, who no longer lives. Can her sacrifice be in vain? Can the protesters that have been

rounded up with the threat of death, thousands, can we leave them abandoned on the streets? Can those who voted going to places of incarceration, desperate, not hearing from their families, can their signoff be such that they never hear our voices? I can cite resolutions. You know that I'm on every one. And by the very back of them and your brilliance and your advocacy, members flee from their offices toward the floor to debate those resolutions and to be able to cast their votes yes. Yes.

And so what is my challenge? My challenge is as we begin the end of this conference that we go into the 118th Congress within the shadow of our minds, January 6th, when this place was under siege, but yet patriots came together and demanded that we have a peaceful transfer of power. That means that we are obligated because we have had the experience to embrace your message. We have declared, as you well know, standing with Secretary Clinton, that MEK is not a terrorist organization. We did that together. We did that together.

And so however we can find the way, the pathway for Madame Rajavi to travel and for us to be able to welcome her, we understand the challenges, but we must work together. So Madame President, let me say if you can hear the sound of this room and the applause that follows, my heart continues as my colleagues continue to feel the pain and show the tears at the loss of loved ones over and over again. And it continues to stand with all of our might to condemn the mullahs, the president, the collaboration with Russia against Ukraine, the fight that comes with terrorists in the form of a war continue, you as patriots in this room let us stand as we go into the new session and demand, as this administration has done, more sanctions as is necessary, but a policy that reaffirms the values that have been established by our Madame President and that we go into the sunrise of the 118th Congress with what is on our lips not blocked but the freedom of the Iranian people, and we do not rest until the people of Iran are free, they're able to vote their conscience, the Iranian Americans are able to go home, claim their land, claim their families, bury and honor those who died and that we live in a free America and a free Iran. I will not rest until there is a free Iran. It is not partisan it is bipartisan. It is all of us and President Biden stands along with us as we do in the United States Congress. Let the following words go far and let the victory not be mine but be yours. God bless you. May the blessings be upon you. May freedom be on our lips, and may freedom be our call, and let us never give up, never give in, and never give out the late John Lewis has challenged us to do.

Thank you all so very much. Together, freedom, freedom, let's hear it. Together, freedom, together, freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom forever. Forever.

And that was a speech by Steve Cohen. I am so honored to see what you all are doing. We must have this kind of wonderful young leadership.