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Congressmen denounce US opposition to resolution

Reps. Lantos and Frank appalled at US decision not to endorse UN Human Rights for world's LGBT

WASHINGTON, DC — Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Barney Frank (D-MA) denounced the Administration's refusal to endorse a resolution at the UN Commission for Human Rights expressing their "deep concern at the occurrence of violations of human rights in the world against persons on the grounds of their sexual orientation," and called upon "all States to promote and protect the human rights of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation."

The landmark resolution, presented by Brazil and co-sponsored by Canada and 18 European countries, was actively opposed by a group of Islamic countries that claimed the resolution went counter to their religion and laws.

A State Department spokesman said last week that the US would also not endorse the resolution because it is difficult for the US to commit to "something that requires some sort of universal application throughout the system, unless it covers basic principles that we do in the federal system."

The Administration did not explain how the resolution's non-discrimination principle is not considered a basic principle in America.

"I am outraged at the Administration's failure to seize this critical opportunity to confront the failure of many governments to fight discrimination and violence against people based on their sexual orientation," said Rep. Lantos, the top Democrat on the International Relations Committee.

"It is truly shocking that the United States would join forces with countries like Libya, Algeria and Saudi Arabia in opposition to a resolution calling on all nations to respect the human rights of gays and lesbians. Our government's action is providing aid and comfort to regimes that sanction and even participate in the brutal and dehumanizing treatment of gays and lesbians."

"President [George W.] Bush has asserted in the past that he believes all people should be treated fairly without regard to their sexual orientation," added Frank, "so I'm puzzled why his Administration would oppose a resolution that advances that very principle. The Administration's inaction sadly speaks much more loudly than the President's words."

US objected to UN resolution language in hate crimes bill

Issue of worldwide, gay human rights is tabled until next year

Given other recent resolution fiascos between the US and United Nations, perhaps it is not surprising that the language of this resolution was no more appealing to the US than the language of the never-got-it-launched ultimatum to Saddam Hussein.

Let's hope this resolution gaffe does not lead to war on us.

The US would not have supported an historic United Nations resolution endorsing gay human rights recently because it did not believe the UN session was the appropriate forum for the matter, *Agence France-Presse* reported.

The annual meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission ended after some Muslim nations tried to block a vote on the resolution, which was ultimately postponed until next year.

US State Department official confirmed the

United States intended to abstain from the vote.

"Given the multiple authorities addressing these issues and the wide variety of ways in which these issues arise, the US was not prepared to endorse the language of this resolution," spokesman Richard Boucher said.

Existing anti-discrimination legislation in US states and cities "makes it difficult for the US, in meetings like this, to commit itself to something that requires some sort of universal application throughout the system," he said.

The Human Rights Campaign was hugely disappointed in the US position.

"We are troubled by reports the US would choose to abstain from voting on a resolution that would protect the civil and human rights of the world's gay community," said HRC director Elizabeth Birch. "We are eager to work with the State Department, allied groups and our supporters in Congress on this resolution when it next comes up for consideration."



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Express your outrage at the support being shown to Sen. Santorum's bigoted language comparing homosexuality to pedophilia, bestiality

The *New York Times* has reported, upon returning from a two-week recess, senior Republican leaders in both houses of Congress have risen to the defense of Sen. Rick Santorum. Senate Majority leader Bill Frist was quoted as saying that Santorum's support among his fellow Republicans in the Senate was solid.

Santorum is the third highest ranking Republican in the Senate. "Absolutely, he will remain in leadership," Dr. Frist told reporters. "He has the full, 100 percent confidence of the Republican leadership in the US Senate."

In a Task Force media release, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director Lorri L. Jean said, in part, "It is despicable that a US Senator would devalue our families by presenting them as a threat to the American family, and by comparing them to man-dog, man-child 'relationships.' We are the American family."

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