

H.R.589 - The MAHSA Act

Rep. Jim Banks (IN-03)

BLUF: Rep. Banks' bipartisan MAHSA Act was signed into law in April 23, 2024. The MAHSA Act imposes sanctions on the Iranian regime for its support for terrorism and its human rights abuses, such as the murder of Mahsa Amini. It also expresses the Sense of Congress that the U.S. shall stand with the people of Iran and will hold the regime accountable for its abuses.

Background:

- On September 16, 2022, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurdish woman, Mahsa Amini, died after being detained and beaten at the hands of a patrol of the Iranian regime's "Morality Police" for allegedly not wearing a headscarf correctly in public.
- Mahsa Amini's death triggered months of the largest pro-democracy and anti-regime protests in Iran since 1979, with women burning their hijabs in protest and Iranian people chanting "death to the dictator!"
- The Iranian regime's brutal crackdown against the protests killed over 500 protestors, and the regime resumed all hijab street patrols in July 2023.
- This bill holds Iran's regime accountable for human rights abuses like the death of Mahsa and the regime's terrorist activity while avoiding collateral damage on ordinary Iranians.
- Rep. Banks first introduced the MAHSA Act in the 117th Congress. It was passed by the House in September 2023 and was signed into law as part of a larger national security package on April 23, 2024.
- Senators Marco Rubio and Alex Padilla led the MAHSA Act in the Senate.

Key Provisions:

- Sense of Congress that the United States shall stand with the people of Iran in the demand for fundamental human rights, shall continue to hold regime leadership accountable for its abuses, and that Iran must immediately end its gross violation of human rights.
- Requires a determination from the President no later than 90 days after passage (July 24th, 2024) and annually afterwards whether certain Iranian entities meet the criteria for sanctions under certain existing statutes and executive orders.
- The President is required to examine the following entities for sanctions applicability:
 - Iran's Supreme Leader, the Supreme Leader's Office, and his appointees;
 - Iran's president and cabinet officials; and
 - Regime-affiliated foundations and firms affiliated with the Supreme Leader.
- The President will then:
 - Impose statutory sanctions on any of those entities under the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 and the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2021; and
 - Pursue sanctions on any of those entities under Executive Orders 13876, 13553, 13224, and 13818.
- Provides the chair and ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs or Senate Foreign Relations Committees the ability to request that the President determine whether specific Iranian entities qualify for sanctions and requires the President to issue that determination in an unclassified report and state whether the President will impose sanctions on them.