

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action:	Be Adopted
Vote:	7 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Berger, Buckley, Esquivel, Hunt, Roblan, Thatcher, Rosenbaum
Nays:	-
Exc.:	-
Prepared By:	Jim Stenbridge, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	5/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Urges the President of the United States and Congress to reexamine the nation's foreign policy toward Ethiopia, condemning dictatorship that oppresses and abuses the citizens of Ethiopia.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Specifics of recent events in Ethiopia

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: According to the Ethiopian Embassy, between 1991 and 1995, the transitional government of Ethiopia, a coalition of 27 political and liberation organizations, embarked on its path to transform Ethiopia from a centralized, military-controlled country to a free and democratic federation. In 1994, a new constitution was written, setting up a bicameral legislature and a judicial system, and guaranteeing equal rights and freedom of expression to all of the Ethiopian citizens. In May 1995, Ethiopia's first free and democratic elections were held.

In the most recent election, although the opposition gained a significant number of seats in Parliament, some of its leaders rejected the results and called for civil disobedience. Disturbances followed in a number of cities including the capital, Addis Ababa. Leaders of the major opposition party as well as leaders of civil society were detained and are currently standing trial.

According to an Amnesty International report dated May 2, 2007, one year after their trial opened in Addis Ababa on May 2, 2006, 48 members of the opposition Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party (CUDP), human rights defenders, and journalists are still in prison. Most charges carry possible death sentences. They are on trial for allegedly inciting violence in opposition demonstrations in 2005 protesting alleged electoral fraud. The demonstrations started peacefully but ended in clashes with government forces that shot dead 187 demonstrators.

5/14/2007 4:05:00 PM

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.