

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMM. PRINT 119–8
OFFERED BY MR. PANETTA OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of subtitle B of title XVII, add the following:

1 SEC. 17_. DETERMINATION ON ELIGIBILITY FOR CYBER
2 PILOT PROGRAM.

3 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

4 (1) The Islamic Republic of Iran has developed
5 sophisticated cyber capabilities, including offensive
6 cyber operations conducted by the Islamic Revolutionary
7 Guard Corps (IRGC) and its affiliated entities,
8 which have targeted U.S. and allied critical infrastructure,
9 as evidenced by attacks like the 2012
10 Shamoon virus against Saudi Aramco and persistent
11 cyberattacks against U.S. financial institutions.

12 (2) The Iranian regime uses cyber tools to suppress
13 dissent, including through widespread internet
14 shutdowns during the 2019 and 2022-2023 protests,
15 which restricted access to information and communication
16 for millions of Iranian citizens advocating
17 for political reform. Iranian civil society, including
18 pro-democracy activists, women’s rights groups, and
19 student organizations, has increasingly utilized cyber

1 tools to circumvent regime censorship, organize pro-
2 tests, and expose human rights abuses, dem-
3 onstrating potential to counter the regime's cyber
4 dominance.

5 (3) The Department of Defense's pilot program
6 under section 398a of title 10, United States Code,
7 authorizes the Secretary of Defense to enhance the
8 cyber capabilities of foreign security forces and other
9 entities to conduct cyber operations aligned with
10 U.S. national security interests, including countering
11 adversarial regimes.

12 (4) Supporting Iranian organizations with cyber
13 expertise could weaken the regime's ability to control
14 information and repress dissent, aligning with U.S.
15 strategic objectives to promote stability and demo-
16 cratic values in the region without direct military
17 intervention.

18 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
19 gress that the United States should leverage the pilot pro-
20 gram authorized under section 398a of title 10, United
21 States Code, to support Iranian organizations advocating
22 for nonviolent political change or weakening the Iranian
23 regime's cyber control, thereby advancing U.S. national
24 security objectives.

25 (c) DETERMINATION REQUIRED.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
3 retary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary
4 of State and the Director of National Intelligence,
5 shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
6 mittees a determination, including a detailed jus-
7 tification, of which organizations inside or outside of
8 Iran advocating for political change qualify or could
9 qualify for participation in the pilot program author-
10 ized under section 398a of title 10, United States
11 Code.

12 (2) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—A determina-
13 tion under paragraph (1) with respect to an organi-
14 zation shall include—

15 (A) the primary objectives and cyber capa-
16 bilities of the organization; and

17 (B) an assessment of the risks associated
18 with supporting the organization, including po-
19 tential regime retaliation or co-option by the
20 Government of Iran or other malign actors.

21 (d) CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY.—An organization
22 may be determined to be eligible for the pilot program au-
23 thorized under section 398a of title 10, United States
24 Code, under subsection (c) if it meets the following cri-
25 teria:

1 (1) The organization is engaged in nonviolent
2 advocacy for political change, human rights, or
3 democratic reform in Iran, including through cyber
4 activities such as disseminating information, circum-
5 venting censorship, or exposing regime abuses.

6 (2) The organization operates independently of
7 and in opposition to the Iranian government, the
8 IRGC, the Ministry of Intelligence and Security, or
9 other regime-affiliated entities, as verified through
10 intelligence assessments.

11 (3) The organization demonstrates the capacity
12 or potential to develop cyber capabilities and has not
13 been infiltrated by the Government of Iran, or any
14 of its affiliates or proxies.

15 (4) The organization's activities align with U.S.
16 national security interests, including countering
17 Iran's malign cyber activities or weakening the re-
18 gime's ability to suppress dissent through cyber
19 means.

20 (e) PILOT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—Support provided
21 under the pilot program authorized under section 398a of
22 title 10, United States Code, to eligible organizations may
23 include the following:

1 (1) Provision of cyber tools to protect against
2 regime surveillance, hacking, or cyberattacks tar-
3 geting activists and dissidents.

4 (2) Provision of information regarding regime
5 activities to infiltrate, track, and deny and degrade
6 the capabilities of eligible organizations.

7 (3) Support for cyber operations that expose re-
8 gime corruption or human rights abuses, such as
9 data leaks or public awareness campaigns, conducted
10 in coordination with U.S. Cyber Command or other
11 relevant entities

12 (f) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-
13 FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congres-
14 sional committees” means—

15 (1) the Committee on Armed Services and the
16 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
17 resentatives; and

18 (2) the Committee on Armed Services and the
19 Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

