

Fixing the Iran Deal

Background and Key Details

Objective: Address the major flaws of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by requiring the automatic “snapback” of U.S. sanctions should Iran violate enhanced and existing restrictions on its nuclear program.

Background on JCPOA’s Flaws: Beginning in 2010, Congress overwhelmingly passed a series of devastating sanctions on Iran’s economy, forcing Iran to the negotiating table.

In 2015, the Obama administration and international partners negotiated an agreement with Iran aimed at restricting Tehran’s nuclear program.

Unfortunately, the JCPOA—which was opposed by a bipartisan majority in Congress—contained a number of major flaws, including:

Sunsets: At year eight of the deal, restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program begin to “sunset,” allowing Iran to steadily industrialize its uranium enrichment program. By year 15, all restrictions expire, bringing Iran to the brink of nuclear breakout.

Verification: The JCPOA fails to provide the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) necessary authority to verify Iran’s compliance with the agreement.

Research and Development: The JCPOA allows Iran to develop advanced centrifuges which dramatically reduces the time needed to produce a nuclear weapon.

Key Provision: Automatic snapback of U.S. sanctions should Iran go under a one-year “breakout” period and move closer to a nuclear weapon.

The legislation automatically re-imposes sanctions if Iran’s nuclear program violates certain restrictions. These restrictions:

- remain in force indefinitely, effectively ridding the JCPOA of its sunset provisions as they apply to U.S. sanctions;
- bolster IAEA verification powers; and
- limit Iran’s advanced centrifuge program.

The legislation, if passed, would:

- establish a U.S. policy on Iran that is backed by a bipartisan majority in Congress;
- empower a diplomatic push to unify our allies behind a common Iran policy; and
- focus U.S. policy toward permanently halting Iran’s nuclear program and combatting the full spectrum of Iran’s nefarious activities.

The legislation would not conflict with the JCPOA upon passage. Instead, it would set conditions that halt Iran’s nuclear program and provide a window of time for firm diplomacy and pressure to work.