

Washington update- April 10, 2018

I want to say a few words to express the gratitude of Ethiopian-Americans for today's historic vote. HR 128 puts America on the side of democracy and human rights. It won't solve Ethiopia's problems. Only Ethiopians can solve Ethiopia's problems. But it represents hope and encouragement from the most powerful country on earth, and that's important.

I particularly want to thank Representative Chris Smith, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, and other members of Congress including Mike Coffman of Colorado who took an interest in Ethiopia. They could easily have looked the other way. Instead, they are doing what they can to help Ethiopians to achieve the things that Americans take for granted: the ability to elect their own government, freedom of speech, and the rule of law.

Thank you, and I hope we can all gather soon after the Senate has passed this legislation, and to celebrate the President's signature as well.

Honoring Congressman Chris Smith:

We in the Ethiopian-American Community greatly appreciate Congressman Chris Smith's commitment to advancing democracy, human rights and good governance in Ethiopia.

Congressman Chris Smith and his staff have dedicated extraordinary energy and attention to Ethiopia. They have traveled to Ethiopia on fact finding mission and have held many hearings about democracy and human rights in Ethiopia. He has tried to hold those in power in Ethiopia responsible for their misdeeds, and has worked tirelessly to make America a force for good in Ethiopia. For this we are in debt to him.

Mesfin Mekonen, Ethiopian-Americans Community

