

H.3982 An Act Relative to Congo Conflict Minerals

SUMMARY

H3982 *An Act Relative to Congo Conflict Minerals* would prohibit publicly traded companies that fail to comply with federal law (the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act) from contracting with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

BACKGROUND

Embedded in the financial reform measure signed into law in 2009 was a truly historic regulatory provision pertaining to the Democratic Republic of Congo. In an effort to choke off funding for the armed groups who have killed more than six million people and turned the Congo into the rape capital of the world, federal law now requires publicly traded companies to disclose whether their products contain minerals from rebel-controlled mines in Congo.

Greed for the Congo's mineral wealth has been a prime cause of the atrocities and conflict, and multiple armed groups use mass rape as a strategy to intimidate and control communities as they profit from the illicit trade of Congo's conflict minerals such as tin, tungsten, tantalum, and gold. Many of these same conflict minerals end up in our electronic devices such as cell phones and laptops.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called the situation in Congo "truly one of mankind's greatest atrocities." Indeed, the U.N. has recorded hundreds of thousands of cases of sexual violence in eastern Congo.

PROBLEM

The Federal law is not a ban on products from the Congo but merely a reporting requirement reinforcing the United States' commitment to stop the violence in eastern Congo. The way to stop the war on women and the human devastation occurring in the Congo is to curtail the demand of these illegal minerals.

Massachusetts can influence electronics industry leaders as they decide where to invest in Congo and whether to make their supply chains transparent and verifiably free of conflict mineral products. Massachusetts is home to many computer and electronics companies and is proud of its high-tech industry. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts should not spend tax dollars on companies that fail to comply with Federal law.

SOLUTIONS

Encouraging compliance with federal law, H3982 *An Act Relative to Congo Conflict Minerals* prohibits publicly traded companies that fail to comply with federal law from obtaining procurement contracts with the Commonwealth until they comply with the law.

SAMPLE OF SUPPORTERS

Africa Faith and Justice Network
Amnesty International USA
Association Juridique pour les Victimes - DRC
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center
Boston Branch - Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Congo Action Now
Enough Project
Extractive Industries Working Group
Femme Affranchie pour le Développement Durable et la Protection de l'Environnement - DRC
Global Witness
Jewish World Watch
Massachusetts Women's Bar Association
Our Bodies Ourselves
Physicians for Human Rights
Promote Congo, Inc.
RDC Section - Ligue Internationale des Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté - DRC
Réseau Jeunes dans le Monde pour la Paix - DRC
Shalupe Foundation
E. Denise Simmons - Cambridge City Councillor
The Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights
The International Corporate Accountability Roundtable
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
U.S.-Congolese for Unity, Peace and Development
Village Cobaye - DRC

STATUS

Filed 9/30/11 by Representative Marty Walsh. Currently assigned to House Committee on Ways and Means.

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