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## **HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO MARK-UP H.R. 2003 ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2007**

The Coalition for H.R. 2003 is pleased to announce that HR 2003 (“Ethiopia Democracy and accountability Act of 2007”), introduced by Chairman Donald Payne of the Subcommittee on Africa on April 20, 2007, has been scheduled for a mark-up vote in the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday, September 26, 2007, at 10 A.M. <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/testimony.asp?committee=1>

**H.R. 2003 has 85 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives!**

It is expected that the Committee will mark-up the bill and recommend it to the floor with a do-pass recommendation, the highest level of approval that can be given to a bill by a committee. The bill requires the ruling regime to:

- Release of ALL political prisoners and restore the democratic rights of the people.
- Institute democratic reforms with accountability.
- Provide protections for human rights advocates and civic society organization and ensure the existence of adequate monitoring and reporting processes.
- Set up an independent judicial system with proper monitoring processes to protect judges from political interference.
- Bring to justice all human rights abusers, including the killers of 193 innocent men, women and children and those who wounded 763 others in the post-2005 election period, and thousands of others.
- Improve election procedures and ensure fraud free elections.

- Remove press censorship and restrictive press laws and establish a program to strengthen private media in Ethiopia.

The bill also

- Offers training programs for democratic participation.
- Limits the use of U.S. security assistance to peacekeeping and counter-terrorism and NOT against the civilian population.
- Fosters economic development.
- Provides assistance to strengthen local, regional, and national parliaments and governments, political parties, and civil society groups.
- Strengthens training for political parties in the areas of organization building and campaign management.
- Provides training for civil society groups in election monitoring.
- Promotes dispute resolution by means of dialogue, negotiations and compromise, and
- Professionalizes the National Election Board to help it address certain issues, e.g. issues delimitation of constituencies, voter and candidate registration, political party registration, voting irregularities and challenges.

Members of the Kinijit Delegation touring the U.S. are expected to attend and observe the proceedings.

The Coalition will provide further updates as soon as they become available.