

America

13 States Defy Iran Sanctions

All 50 states must comply in order for sanctions against the rogue regime to work.

BY SHARON HARRIS-ZLOTNICK

THE NEXT ROUNDS OF SANCTIONS against Iran need not expose Russia, China, or Syria, but rather the United States, as largely ignoring the civilized world's call to tighten the screws on Iran's nuclear-coveting mullahs.

Three years after federal sanctions were enacted, the majority of U.S. states have yet to sign off on comprehensive barriers to trade with Iran. Worse, 13 states allow shipping companies that do business with Iran

to access their ports. Those revelations come from the New York-based United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI) group, a nonprofit dedicated to preventing Iran from attaining nuclear weapons. Only seven states, California, Indiana, Michigan, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Florida, have enacted so-called "debarment legislation." And a few of those have ports that continue to allow access to companies that do business with Iran.

Three other states, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Missouri,

have pending debarment legislation. "We've had real success with debarment, because it forces companies to immediately make a choice," UANI Communications Director Nathan Carleton tells Newsmax. "Some companies have stopped doing business immediately with Iran."

UANI wants the debarment process adopted in all 50 states. Doing so would reinforce federal sanctions.

In July 2010, Congress passed legislation against Iran called The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act. That bill banned any federal agency from contracting with companies that in turn did business in Iran, and encouraged state and local governments to cancel public investments in companies linked to Iran's energy sector.

Some 24 states and the District of Columbia have in place a lesser sanction called "divestment legisla-

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U.S. Ports Scrutinized

Some U.S. ports permit access to shipping companies that do business with Iran.

	State	Port
1	Washington	Port of Tacoma, Port of Seattle
2	Oregon	Port of Portland
3	California	Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, Port of Oakland
4	Texas	Port of Houston, Port of Galveston
5	Louisiana	Port of New Orleans
6	Alabama	Port of Mobile
7	Florida	Port Miami, Port Everglades, Port of Jacksonville, Port Canaveral, Port of Tampa
8	Georgia	Port of Savannah
9	North Carolina	Charlotte Inland Terminal, Port of Wilmington
10	Virginia	Norfolk International Terminals
11	Maryland	Port of Baltimore
12	Pennsylvania	Port of Philadelphia
13	New York	Port of N.Y. and N.J.



This Month in History



50 YEARS AGO

1963

Civil rights activist Medgar Evers is killed in Jackson, Miss.



25 YEARS AGO

1988

Kay Cottee becomes first woman to sail the world alone.

tion." Divestment laws recall the sanctions levied against the apartheid regime of South Africa in the mid-1980s. It specifies that the state is not to invest any of its funds in companies that do business in Iran.

UANI views divestment as a step in the right direction. In 2008, when Maryland's General Assembly adopted a version of the divestment law, its state pension and investments board divested \$38.3 million from Britain's Royal Dutch Shell in 2009.

It also warned 13 additional companies about their Iranian investments.

But divestment falls short of actual debarment. Ports and shipping play a key role in Iran's push for regional hegemony. Ports in Iran are controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and his regime



IRAN'S LIFELINE Iran benefits greatly from imports.

use the ports to bring in components for Iran's nuclear and ballistic-missile programs. Also, it uses its ports to ship weapons to other radical forces in the Middle East. Experts say that almost certainly means that goods bound for Iran are transiting through U.S. ports en route to the Islamic nation.

The potential impact of state-level sanctions on Iran is huge. State and local pension funds control more than \$3 trillion in investments. According to a 2012 report by the National Association of State Budget Officers, state governments manage over \$1.5 trillion in annual expenditures.

Orde Kittrie, a professor of law at Arizona State University and senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a D.C.-based think tank, says the best way to tighten sanctions is to enlist the support of major U.S. states.

"The most impactful next step, at the state level, would be to persuade the remaining big budget states, topped by Texas, to adopt Iran contracting laws," says Kittrie.

Now that Florida and California have signed on to state-level sanctions, the remaining big enchilada is Texas, which spends \$92 billion per year on

various state contracts. UANI hopes to enlist several other major states as well, including Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, Massachusetts, and Illinois.

"At the federal level," Kittrie adds, "the most crucial next step would be to broaden the scope of federal legislation empowering states to adopt their own sanctions on Iran. Expanding the scope of federal authorization would encourage states to sanction companies doing other business with Iran."

Opponents of Iran's nuclear activities are pushing two other measures. One is legislation that would require all financial institutions in any given state to certify that they have no business interactions with other institutions that, in turn, do business with banks in Iran.

Virtually all banking in Iran is controlled by the government, and this measure would considerably tighten Iran's purse strings.

Another sector under close scrutiny is insurance. Proposed legislation would have all insurance firms licensed by each state insurance commissioner divest of any equity holding related to Iran.

UANI also wants to block insurance firms from underwriting various Iranian endeavors, such as providing insurance for its vessels. Doing so could hamper Iran's ability to do business on global waterways.

UANI CEO Mark D. Wallace, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under George W. Bush, lauds sanctions as using "pen and ink over bullets and bombs."

He adds, "Robust sanctions must be part of a total strategy." □

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