

Washington update

October 9, 2017

The Ethiopian government has launched a lobbying campaign to persuade Ethiopian-Americans to oppose Senate Resolution 168. Enactment of SR 168 would do no more than put the U.S. government on record as supporting human rights and democracy in Ethiopia.

As part of its lobbying effort, the Ethiopian government is paying for form letters to be sent to Ethiopian-Americans. They are trying to persuade Ethiopian-Americans to sign the letters which contain lies about SR 168 and the Ethiopian opposition movement.

The form letter falsely claims that the Ethiopian government allows peaceful protests. In fact, the U.S. State Department, the authors of SR 168 and a similar House resolution, Amnesty International and other organizations have documented the Ethiopian government's jailing of political opponents, violent suppression of protests, and violations of basic human rights.

The Ethiopian government claims in the letter that it is battling against a "well organized and well-funded" Ethiopian opposition. In fact, the Ethiopian opposition consists entirely of volunteers who care deeply about Ethiopia. It is the Ethiopian government, not the opposition that is mounting a "well-funded" campaign using professional lobbyists.

According to public records, the Ethiopian government is paying S.G.R. LLC, a scandal-tainted lobbying firm, \$150,000 a month to influence American policy. S.G.R. worked for disgraced former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn. After President Trump fired Flynn, Flynn revealed that he had failed to report his lobbying for Turkish President Erdogan. As part of his secret work to help Erdogan crush democratic opposition and gain dictatorial power, Flynn paid S.G.R. hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Now S.G.R. is pressuring Senators to withdraw their support for SR 168.

The Ethiopian-American community should make sure its voice is heard. Call and write to co-sponsors of SR 168, to members of the Senate Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Committee urging them to support enactment of SR 168.

To express your support for SR 168, visit

<https://phonecongress.com/topic/congress/bills/sres168-115/351691>

to find your Senator's contact information. Also, go to

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/sres168/details> and click on the names of co-sponsors.