

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2006

- Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the efforts of the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute (MCLI), a non-profit organization in my district. The MCLI, founded in 1965, is a think tank that works on national and international human rights issues as they relate to the U.S. In 1995, the Institute's Human Rights Reporting Project began using U.S. treaties as tools to work for human rights.
- In 2005, the MCLI issued a report entitled Challenging U.S. Human Rights Violations Since 9/11 in response to the failure of the U.S. government to submit timely and accurate reports to the United Nations (UN). According to 3 U.N. treaties ratified by the U.S. in 1992 and 1994, the U.S. is required to submit regular reports to U.N. oversight committees about human rights abuses and enforcement measures at the local, State, and Federal levels.
- On March 15, 2005, the Berkeley City Council passed Resolution 62,841 in which the City Council resolved to submit a copy of Challenging to the U.S. State Department, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN Human Rights Committee. On March 31, 2005, MCLI presented Challenging to the U.S. State Department for use in the preparation of its late reports to the oversight committees.
- Although the second and third reports for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) treaty were due in 1998 and 2003, the U.S. State Department did not file a report until October 21, 2005. According to the MCLI, this combined second and third report fails to contain various instances of U.S. human rights violations and lack of enforcement measures. The combined U.S. Report will be discussed by the U.N. Human Rights Committee in March 2006 in New York and will be examined in greater detail by the committee in the summer of 2006 in Geneva.
- The Challenging report raises important enforcement and reporting violations committed by the U.S. I encourage my colleagues to read this report for more information. The U.S. must comply with the treaties it signed in order to protect the rights of individuals both domestically and abroad and to realign the U.S. with the principles it was founded on. I appreciate the work of MCLI to promote and protect human rights around the globe and congratulate them on this report.