

# Special May 10 Rally Report

## **Rally Urging Senators Boxer & Feinstein (D-CA) & John Kerry (D-MA) to Allow Vietnam Human Rights Act - HR2833 to Be Voted Upon.**

By Hang Nguyen and Gwen Dyrud

*(Rally pictures are displayed at: <http://www.avra.org/activities.html> and <http://www.avra.org/pressrel.html> for your viewing)*

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA - Vietnam Human Rights Day, Friday May 10, saw a Delegation of almost 50 people, well equipped with American and Vietnamese flags and banners, organized by the American Vietnamese Republican Assembly, (VARAOC) a Unit of the California Republican Assembly chartered by the California Republican Party depart for a rally in front of the offices of Sen. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) to urge a full Senate debate and vote on Vietnam Human Rights Act - HR2833. Their bus departed from Orange County at 9:30 AM to take the Delegation to Sen. Boxer's office located at 312 N. Spring Street in Los Angeles where they called for Sen. Boxer to vote on the Vietnam Human Rights Act.

The Delegation was led by BachLien T. TranBatdorf, AVRAOC Founding President, together with Mr. An Huynh, Truc Son, Mr. & Mrs. Le Thi Bich and their teen children, Henry Phuoc Trinh, Nguyen Thin, Minister Phung Quang, Attorney Doan Thanh Liem, Le Tu Ha, Mrs. Ho Thang and many other human rights activists, from teenagers to seniors, who took their deep concern for Vietnam to the sidewalks in front Sen. Boxer's office with banners saying "Please Support HR 2833! - Yes on VN Human Rights Act! - Please Sen. Boxer, Feinstein & Sen. Kerry (D-MA) Allow VN Human Rights Act -- HR2833 to be Voted!"

In addition, TV Channel #6 News came to report on the Rally while Delegates were distributing copies of the Resolution passed by the California Republican Assembly (CRA) urging Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) and the full United States Senate to allow the Vietnam Human Rights Act to be voted on in the Senate. Resolution copies were provided to bypassers, federal staff during their lunch hour as well as to police officers, while BachLien called up to Sen. Boxer's office to report that she was leading a rally of almost 50 human rights activists demonstrating in front of her office. When the Delegates asked for a meeting with Sen. Boxer regarding the Human Rights Act for Vietnam, six members were invited to come inside for a discussion. They included Attorney Doan Thanh Liem, Minister Phung Quang, Mr. Nguyen Thin, Henry Phuoc Trinh, Mrs. Le Thi Bich and BachLien TranBatdorf.

Following a strict search by the Federal Security Guards, all tape recorders, cameras and cam-recorders were refused due to federal building security. Hattie Stewart, on behalf of Sen. Boxer, greeted the six members from the Rally, and both sides debated for approximately one hour. The CRA Resolution was presented to Ms. Stewart and the Delegation discussed the difficulties facing the H.R. 2833 caused by Sen. John Kerry's (D-MA) refusal to allow the legislation to go to the Senate floor for a debate and vote.

In observation of Vietnam Human Rights Day on May 10, the Delegation asked Sen. Boxer to support the Human Rights Act. "Why did Sen. Kerry refuse this legislation?" Stewart asked the Delegation. She was told it was because Sen. Kerry believes there is no violation of human rights in Vietnam.

"Evidently, in a letter he wrote to the Vietnamese American community, he claimed that if this particular Vietnam Human Rights Act gets passed, then the humanitarian aid to the poor in Vietnam would be discontinued; therefore, this legislation is not good for Vietnam," replied the Delegation; "Sen. Kerry's statement was not based on fact because of the Vietnam Human Rights Act fails to include these conditions but states that if Communist Vietnam would not respect religious freedom and human rights, then consequently, the non-humanitarian aid would not be increased."

In addition, BachLien pressed Ms. Stewart about the 12,000 petitions that she and the Movement for Religious Freedom and Human Rights in Vietnam presented to Sen. Boxer's office last October. "Where are these 12,000 petitions now?" BachLien asked; "According to other human rights activists' reports in Washington DC that Sen. Boxer's DC office reports having received only an about 30 petitions from her constituents in California asking for support of the Vietnam Human Rights Act. This has caused the constituents who signed the petitions to be very distressed! In response, we are here today to demonstrate our request of Sen. Boxer for support of this bill. All of the people participating in the Rally today are constituents who signed those petitions".

"I think those 12,000 petitions have been transferred to a special place for "Anthrax" check in Chicago due to the 9-11 event; therefore, they have not been received in Washington, DC yet," Stewart replied.

Furthermore, BachLien requested that she search for the 12,000 petitions and report to the constituents who signed them because they were eager to hear from Sen. Boxer. Ms. Stewart took notes of all matters raised today and promised to present these matters to Sen. Boxer in Washington DC for investigation of the 12,000 petitions and a response to her constituents. In addition to these specific concerns, Stewart emphasized the need for many people to write, call and fax petitions, resolutions, requests and testimonies in support of the Vietnam Human Rights Act to all members of the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate which is chaired by Sen. John Kerry including:

[John F. Kerry](#), Chair  
[Robert G. Torricelli](#)  
[Russell D. Feingold](#)  
[John D. Rockefeller IV](#)  
[Paul S. Sarbanes](#)

[Chuck Hagel](#), Ranking  
[Jesse Helms](#)  
[Richard G. Lugar](#)  
[George Allen](#) and

other members of the Foreign Relations Committee: <http://foreign.senate.gov/committee/index.html>

Stewart also requested that BachLien call her the following Monday so she could give an update on the issues raised today. Before leaving, she gave the Delegation a name list of the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee and Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate whom should be contacted for support of the Vietnam Human Rights Act.

At 12:00 Noon, the Delegation moved to Sen. Dianne Feinstein's office located at 11111 Santa Monica Blvd. in LA to continue the Rally urging her also to support of the Vietnam Human Rights Act. After arriving, BachLien also called up to Sen. Feinstein who sent Jim Molinari, State Director and James Peterson, Field Representative out in front to greet the Rally. Again, BachLien presented the CRA Resolution to Molinari and Peterson and explained the reasons for the Rally, then asked Sen. Feinstein to support of the Vietnam Human Rights Act as presented to Sen. Boxer's office.

They took careful notes and acknowledged the matters raise. "Because I had heard of this rally today, thus, I have just come here from the San Francisco Office to hear your concerns;" Molinari said. "Sen. Feinstein agrees to vote on this legislation," Molinari declared while the whole Rally was surrounding the two men with banners firmly urging support of the Vietnam Human Rights Act. Molinari and Peterson appeared to be delighted to meet with the Rally Delegates and shook hands with each person surrounding them.

In addition to the sidewalk Rally, many cars passing by saw the event and honked loudly which encouraged the Rally to continue passing out copies of the CRA Resolution to bypassers while police cars parked across the street protecting the Rally. At 2:00 PM, the bus "Supper Vacation" took the Rally Delegation home, arriving in Orange County at 3:30 PM due to the traffic. ###

American Vietnamese Republican Assembly of Orange County  
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