

## House Resolution Aims to Decrease Crime Rates on Cruise Ships Americans to Be Safer At Sea

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Washington D.C. - Yesterday afternoon, Reps. Doris Matsui (CA-5), Carolyn Maloney (NY-14) and Christopher Shays (CT-14) introduced a House Resolution to call attention to the growing level of crime on cruise ships and the lack of federal regulation overseeing the cruise industry. On Wed., Sept. 19th, at the request of Rep. Matsui, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will hold a second hearing to further investigate this issue.

In 2007, over 12 million Americans will travel on cruise lines. Unfortunately, few of these patrons will know their vulnerability to crime on the open seas. Citizens who are victimized often do not know their legal rights, who to contact for help, or how frequently such atrocities occur.

In recent years, the media has reported a number of high-profile cases of passengers falling overboard, going missing, and being raped or sexually assaulted. Unfortunately, many of these cases remain unresolved or unreported.

The Protect Americans from Crimes on Cruise Ships Resolution recognizes the lack of federal regulation of crime reporting by the cruise industry, the absence of law enforcement officials and protocol aboard cruise ships, and lack of information made available to cruise customers. It states that Americans should have access to justice and information regarding security risks, and that Congress should provide oversight to ensure the safety of American passengers.

“It is simply unacceptable that American citizens are susceptible to such nefarious crimes on cruise ships. Victims continue to have little or no recourse when they have been assaulted. Awareness is a key part of prevention, and this legislation will educate the public about the possibility for a crime to occur onboard cruise ships. Congress needs to provide the oversight and leadership to ensure that vacationers and families are safe and understand their risks. This resolution is a strong first step in establishing this as a priority,” said Rep. Matsui. “Every crime should be fully investigated and prosecuted — no matter where or when it occurs. Unfortunately, victims of cruise ship crime are often not afforded the rights and respect that they deserve. We are committed to holding cruise ship criminals accountable and ensuring that Americans vacationing on cruise ships are safe and secure,” said Rep. Maloney. “This resolution is a continuation of the efforts which began in the last Congress, when I chaired two hearings on the National Security Subcommittee on cruise ship safety. At these hearings, we learned just how inaccurate the crime statistics the cruise industry provides are. It is important Congress continues our oversight and takes steps to

improve the transparency of these crime statistics and the overall safety of cruise ship passengers," said Rep. Shays. Original Co-Sponsors Include: Reps. Arcuri (NY-24), Barrow (GA-12), Marion Berry (AR-1), Boyda (KS-2), Capps (CA-23), Carter (TX-31), Castle (DE), Cohen (TN-9), Doggett (TX-25), Filner (CA-51), Patrick Kennedy (RI-1), Jackson-Lee (TX-18), Lofgren (CA-16), Maloney (NY-14), Matsui (CA-5), Neal (MA-2), Poe (TX-2), Shays (CT-4), Slaughter (NY-28), Sutton (OH-13), Taylor (MS-4), Mike Thompson (CA-1), Towns (NY-10), Watson (CA-33), and Welch (VT).

The Protect Americans from Crimes on Cruise Ships Resolution has received broad support from outside groups, including the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN).

Scott Berkowitz (RAINN president and founder): "RAINN applauds Representatives Matsui, Shays and Maloney for their leadership in bringing attention to the serious issue of crimes committed on cruise ships. This resolution emphasizes the need for congressional oversight to ensure Americans' safety while traveling on the high seas."

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