

SENATE No. 2326

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Edward J. Kennedy

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying resolution:

Resolutions condemning political oppression and encouraging free and fair elections in Cambodia.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Edward J. Kennedy</i>	<i>First Middlesex</i>	
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	
<i>Rodney M. Elliott</i>	<i>16th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/10/2024</i>

SENATE No. 2326

By Mr. Kennedy, a petition (accompanied by resolutions, Senate, No. 2326) of Edward J. Kennedy and Vanna Howard for the adoption of resolutions to condemn political oppression and encouraging free and fair elections in Cambodia. Veterans and Federal Affairs.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 2406 OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

Resolutions condemning political oppression and encouraging free and fair elections in Cambodia.

1 WHEREAS free and fair elections are a vital component of a democratic state in the
2 protection of the liberty and human rights of its citizenship; and

3 WHEREAS the Paris Peace Accords of 1991, signed by the United States and 19 other
4 nations, sought to resolve political conflict and turmoil in Cambodia by setting forth the right to
5 self-determination of its people through free and fair elections; and

6 WHEREAS significant expenditures in the form of international aid have been made in
7 order to promote a pluralistic, multi-party democratic system in Cambodia; and

8 WHEREAS Prime Minister Hun Sen has been in power in Cambodia since 1985 and has
9 been using his absolute power to consolidate authority over the nation’s government, granting

10 control of every state agency and security apparatus including the country's Supreme Court to the
11 ruling Cambodia People's Party (CPP); and

12 WHEREAS each of the five elections held in Cambodia for the office of Prime Minister
13 since 1991 have been marked by fraud, voter intimidation, and the misuse of legal mechanisms
14 by the government to suppress support for opposition candidates and parties, and have thereby
15 not been free nor fair; and

16 WHEREAS the government of Cambodia has engaged in oppressive tactics aimed at
17 limiting conditions that are intrinsic to a democratic state including the restriction of its media
18 environment by ordering radio stations to cease operations and by arresting journalists; and

19 WHEREAS in efforts to repress viable political challenges, the government of Cambodia
20 has dissolved the biggest and only viable rival party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party
21 (CNRP), and has arrested said party's President, Kem Sokha, on politically motivated charges;
22 and

23 WHEREAS the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been enriched by its significant
24 population of Cambodian American people, many of whom entered the United States as refugees
25 or as asylum seekers escaping genocide and from conditions that demonstrate the humanitarian
26 hardships posed by the absence of democracy; and

27 WHEREAS the United States has a responsibility to take action in order to prevent the
28 undermining of democracy around the globe;

29 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature calls upon the Congress, the
30 President and the Vice President of the United States to support and enact legislation and further

31 request that Cambodia adopt the recent recommendations by the United Nations Special
32 Rapporteur of Human Rights in Cambodia in order to promote democracy and prevent the
33 further erosion of human rights in Cambodia, including the Cambodia Democracy Act of 2019
34 and the Cambodian Trade Act of 2019; and

35 THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature transmit copies of
36 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the
37 House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
38 Representative from Massachusetts in the Congress of the United States.