

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF
IRANIAN AMERICANS**

Mission Statement

The mission of the National Association of Iranian Americans (NAIA) is:

- To promote the interests of the Iranian-American community by actively participating in the daily affairs of Congress and the Administration;
- To strengthen the Iranian-American community by educating policy-makers and the general public about the achievements and contributions of Iranian-Americans;
- To ensure that members of Congress and the Administration take the interests and concerns of the Iranian-American community into consideration in their day-to-day decision-making and,
- To promote cultural, commercial, and educational ties between the Iranian-American community and their ancestral home by addressing existing barriers to such exchanges;

To this end, NAIA is, amongst other goals:

- Encouraging members of Congress and the Administration to rectify the negative consequences of recent visa restrictions for Iranian-Americans and Iranian nationals,
- Promoting investments in Iran's IT-sector in order to put the youth in Iran in contact with the globalized world,
- Working with the White House as it prepares an interim report on the consequences of the Iran Libya Sanctions Act due to Congress by December 2003 and,
- Preparing the groundwork for potential changes in restrictions on commercial, cultural and educational exchanges between Iran and the United States.

Issues of Importance

National Association of Iranian Americans

During the first 18 month of its organizational life, the National Association of Iranian Americans (NAIA) will focus on the immediate concerns of the Iranian-American community while establishing long-term relationships with key decision-makers on Capitol Hill and in the White House.

VISA RESTRICTIONS

Starting in January 2003, NAIA will encourage members of Congress and the Administration to rectify the negative consequences of recent visa restrictions for Iranian-Americans and Iranian nationals. On May 8, 2002, Congress passed the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act ([H.R. 3525](#)), as a direct result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Section 306 of the bill states that no nonimmigrant visa shall be issued to any alien from a country that is a state sponsor of international terrorism (which includes Iran but not the countries where the 9/11 terrorists originated from) unless the Secretary of State determines, in consultation with the Attorney General, that such alien does not pose a threat to the safety or national security of the United States.

In practice, the passing of this bill has caused every Iranian national with Iranian-American relatives to be considered guilty unless proven innocent. This piece of legislation makes it significantly more difficult for Iranian-Americans to have their relatives from Iran visit, depriving Iranian-American children the right to interact with their grandparents and maintain family and cultural ties with their ancestral home.

It is a well known fact that al-Qaida has no known Iranian members and that Iranian nationals were in no way involved in the 9/11 attacks or any other al-Qaida operation. Mindful of the above, NAIA will bring the undue consequences of the Visa Entry Reform Act to the attention of lawmakers and Administration officials in order to ensure that these negative consequences are rectified.

INVESTMENTS IN IRAN'S IT-SECTOR

Iran is known to have the most pro-American people in the Middle East, despite the tenuous relations between Washington and Tehran. Policy makers in the U.S. have often contemplated on how to capitalize on the pro-American sentiments of Iran's population, and how to design its policy vis-à-vis Iran in such a way that they won't affect the Iranian people negatively.

Iran also has the youngest population in the world, where over two-thirds of the population is under the age of 30. Iran's youth are extremely technology savvy and have repeatedly ranked in the top three in comparisons between the educational levels of high-

school students from different nations. Bearing in mind Iran's relative isolation, the Internet has proven to be an escape for Iran's freedom yearning youth. Although Iran has relatively liberal Internet laws, scarcity of good technology has left many Iranian youngsters unable to connect with the rest of the world through the Internet.

Currently, due to Executive Order 12957 and 12959, American firms cannot invest in Iran's IT-infrastructure. An exemption to these Executive Orders would enable America to solidify its warm relations with the Iranian people while enabling the youth and future leaders of Iran to learn about American values through the Internet. NAIA will work with the Administration to promote investments in Iran's IT-sector in order to put the youth in Iran in contact with the globalized world.

INTERIM REPORT ON IRAN SANCTIONS

The Iran Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) was first passed in 1996 and then reenacted in July 2001. This Congressional act prohibits non-U.S. firms from investing in Iran's energy sector and makes any amendments to the Executive Orders prohibiting U.S. firms' trade with Iran indirectly fall under the jurisdiction of Congress. As a result, ILSA has impeded the President's maneuverability vis-à-vis Iran.

The sanctions are generally believed to have been unsuccessful in changing Iran's foreign policy and ineffective in causing any significant harm to Iran's economy. They have, however, caused tension between the U.S. and its allies as well as depriving U.S. firms access to Iran's 70 million man strong market.

The White House addressed the negative effects of ILSA during the debate regarding ILSA extension in the summer of 2001. As a result, it was agreed that by December 2003, the White House would submit a report to Congress on the effects of ILSA on Iran's economy, on Iran's foreign policy, on the U.S. economy and on the U.S.'s relations with its allies.

NAIA will work with the White House as it prepares this interim report in order to ensure that it takes into consideration the concerns of the Iranian-American community and ILSA's effects on Iranian-American businesses.

COMMERCIAL, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES

After more than two decades of estranged relations, commercial, cultural and educational exchanges between Iranians and Americans have been kept at a minimum. Inadvertently, the political animosity between the two capitols have separated the two peoples and added to the misconceptions about the "other" side that exists in both countries.

This estrangement between the two people have been particularly troublesome for Iranian-Americans, who unlike other American communities have had to address major

obstacles in order to maintain a cultural bond with their ancestral home. It has also deprived the American people access to the 4,000-year-old Iranian civilization, and the Iranian people from understanding America's culture and values.

Both peoples are paying a high price for this estrangement and awaiting a diplomatic breakthrough between the two countries is not an attractive option. It lies in the interest of both countries to resume exchanges between the two peoples regardless of the state of relations between the two capitols.

NAIA will prepare the groundwork for potential changes in restrictions on commercial, cultural and educational exchanges between Iran and the U.S. in order to minimize the repercussions of this two-decade old political estrangement.

PLAN OF ACTION

The first steps towards reaching NAIA's goals will be to:

- Set up a strong Board with successful and high profile leaders of the Iranian-American community.
- Launch a national membership campaign. Influence lies in numbers and NAIA needs to build a membership base of a minimum of 10,000 Iranian-American members.
- NAIA will start educating and influencing already sympathetic Members of Congress in February 2003 in order to build support for Iranian-American issues.
- By April 2003, NAIA will set up a task force that will remain in continuous contact with the White House, State Department and the Treasury Department in regards to the report on the effects of the Iran Libya Sanctions Act that must be submitted to Congress by December 2003.
- By May 2002, NAIA will set up an Iranian-American Caucus on Capitol Hill with both Republican and Democratic lawmakers as members. The purpose of the Caucus will be to support Iranian-American causes and function as a platform on the Hill for NAIA and Iranian-American.
- NAIA will establish a rapid reaction media kit by June 2003, which will serve to educate media about Iranian-American issues and the Iranian-American community. Media representatives have often been unable to educate themselves about the Iranian-American community due to a lack of organizations such as NAIA, and as a result involuntarily contributed to the misconceptions that exist regarding the members of the community.

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the NAIA Board must be willing to:

- Attend 4 scheduled meetings a year in Washington, DC
- Contribute or commit to raise funds for the Association
- Work in their areas of the country to establish a grass roots network to influence their elected officials
- Visit their elected officials in both their district and Washington, DC
- Establish ongoing relationships with key political leaders from their area
- Write or sign on to letters to the editors, opinion editorials and correspondence to elected leaders that will move the goals of NAIA forward
- Endorse those candidates that work on behalf of the goals of NAIA

Biographies

Darius A. Baghai

Studied Physics and Cybernetics at UCLA, while doing independent research in genetics. Received his JD from Pepperdine University Law School in 1992 and thereafter was admitted to the California, Washington, DC, Massachusetts, and Federal Patent Bars. His interest in politics started earlier. Despite the Iranian hostage crisis of the early 1980's he was elected ASB president of his high school in 1983. At UCLA he was appointed Assistant Facilities Commissioner, and in Law School he was Vice President. He was elected general council of the Iranian American Republican Council (IARC) from 1994 – 96.

1997 he joined MicroStrategy, Inc, a fast growing software company based in Northern Virginia. In 2000 he became Executive Vice President of Sales and Business Development at Eyematic, Inc., a Los Angeles based technology company. He is currently providing legal and business consulting to several firms.

Trita Parsi

Trita Parsi has worked for the Swedish Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York where he served in the Security Council handling affairs for Afghanistan, Iraq, Tajikistan and Western Sahara, and the General Assembly's Third Committee addressing human rights in Iran, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Iraq.

Mr. Parsi is currently pursuing his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies under Professor Francis Fukuyama, while working part-time as a policy advisor to Chairman Robert Ney (R-OH) on the Middle East and Iran.

Mr. Parsi was born in Iran and grew up in Sweden. He earned a Master's degree in international relations at Uppsala University and a second Master's degree in economics at Stockholm School of Economics.

David DiStefano

David has more than 14 years of effective government and lobbying experience in Washington, D.C. and Ohio. He became State Senator Bob Ney's top legislative advisor in the Ohio Senate when he was still at The Ohio State University completing his bachelor's degree in the College of Business. He then served Governor George Voinovich, now a United States Senator, as liaison to the Ohio General Assembly.

When State Senator Ney was elected to the United States Congress, David became his Chief of Staff. For six years David worked with the most prominent and powerful members of Congress, including committee chairmen and their staffs. He has obtained influential contacts in the leadership of both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

David championed Congressman Ney's pro-business causes, resulting in numerous awards from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Federation of Independent Businesses, and other highly acclaimed business achievements.

David's Capitol Hill success was recognized by one of the most powerful lobby associations in Washington, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. They recruited David in 1998 to serve as political director and to lead a massive reinvigoration of their political program to assist in electing pro-business members of Congress. In his first year, David's strategy and efforts raised more than \$1 million for the Chamber PAC.

In January of 2000, David started the government affairs firm Capitol Network, where he serves as President.

Roy C. Coffee

Since leaving the Administration of former Texas Governor George W. Bush, Mr. Coffee has concentrated on legislative matters in both Washington and Texas. Representing clients with interests in deregulation legislation in the Texas Legislature and the United States Congress, efforts to obtain the proper state and federal permitting for a low-level radioactive waste disposal facility, as well as federal teleservices, financial services and education legislation provides a brief overview of Mr. Coffee's diverse client base.

Before joining O'Connor & Hannan, Mr. Coffee served as Austin Director of the Texas Office of State-Federal Relations for four years in Governor Bush's Administration. As Austin Director, Mr. Coffee spent a great deal of time working closely with members of both the Texas Legislature and the Texas Congressional Delegation. Mr. Coffee also worked with other State offices as well as other members of Congress in his efforts to pass legislation on behalf of the State of Texas. Previously, he had served the Governor as Deputy Campaign Manager during Mr. Bush's successful election campaign in 1994.

Prior to attending law school in California, Mr. Coffee served in several capacities during two years on Vice President George Bush's 1988 presidential campaign. He returned to politics following law school, serving as Executive Director of the George Bush for President campaign in Arizona.

Some of Mr. Coffee's current clients include General Electric, BellSouth, Sempra Energy and Voyager Expanded Learning.

BUDGET

O'Connor & Hannan – 12 months at \$20,000/month	\$240,000
Capitol Network – 12 months at \$20,000/month	\$240,000
Executive Director Salary	\$75,000
Office Rental – 12 months at \$5,000/month	\$60,000
<u>Monthly expenses</u>	<u>\$120,000</u>
Total:	\$735,000

Office rental includes all expenses associated with operating an office. Examples include phone, postage, stationary, NAIA's portion of an assistant's salary, etc.

Monthly expenses include:

- Travel to organize Board Membership
- Travel to organize local organizations
- Meal and entertainment expenses for Washington, DC
- 4 Board meetings a year in Washington, DC
- Publication of materials in support of NAIA and its positions