

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Expressing support for the free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy in Venezuela and condemning violence and intimidation against the country's political opposition.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. NELSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. KIRK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy in Venezuela and condemning violence and intimidation against the country's political opposition.

Whereas the National Electoral Council (CNE) of Venezuela declared Nicolás Maduro to be the winner of Venezuela's April 14, 2013, presidential election, after crediting him with receiving 50.6 percent of votes cast;

Whereas Venezuela's political opposition has highlighted widespread incidents of potential electoral irregularities, voter intimidation, and other abuses perpetrated by the Government of Venezuela in favor of the candidacy of Nicolás Maduro;

Whereas the Organization of American States and other multilateral institutions called for a full recount and audit that addresses all claims by participants in the electoral process in Venezuela;

Whereas the Senate of the Republic of Chile, the Christian Democratic Organization of the Americas, the Socialist International, the Union of Latin American parties, and other political organizations in the region have issued declarations recognizing the alleged irregularities documented by the opposition in Venezuela and urged a complete audit of the election results;

Whereas the CNE has denied the political opposition's request for a full and comprehensive audit of the election results that includes the review and comparison of voter registry log books, vote tallies produced by electronic voting machines, and the paper receipts printed by electronic voting machines;

Whereas the Preamble of the Charter of the Organization of American States affirms that "representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace and development of the region," and Article 1 of the Inter-American Democratic Charter recognizes that "the people of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it";

Whereas the republican form of government prescribed in the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has its legislative branch in the National Assembly, where the free participation and deliberation of its democratically elected representatives is essential to legislate and check the powers of the executive branch;

Whereas the President of the National Assembly denied opposition parties the right to speak in the legislature from April 16 to May 21, 2013, and removed them from key committees in response to their refusal to recognize Nicolás Maduro as president;

Whereas members of the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) violently assaulted opposition legislators on April 16 and April 30, 2013, in the National Assembly, causing lacerations, broken bones, and other injuries to members of the political opposition;

Whereas the Department of State responded to the violence against opposition legislators in Venezuela by declaring that “violence has no place in a representative and democratic system, and is particularly inappropriate in the National Assembly”;

Whereas the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) has repudiated the incident by stating that it “reflects, in a dramatic manner, the absence of a political dialogue that can bring tranquility to the citizens and to the members of the different public powers to resolve in a peaceful climate and with everybody’s participation the pending matters of the country”;

Whereas the Congress of the Republic of Peru passed a resolution rejecting the use of violence against opposition parties in the Venezuelan National Assembly and expressing solidarity with those injured by the events of April 2013; and

Whereas, as a member of the Organization of American States and signatory to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela has agreed to abide by the principles of constitutional, rep-

representative democracy, which include free and fair elections and adherence to its own constitution: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports the people of Venezuela in their
3 pursuit of the free exercise of representative democ-
4 racy in Venezuela;

5 (2) calls for greater dialogue between all polit-
6 ical actors in Venezuela and strongly deplores the
7 undemocratic denial of legitimate parliamentary
8 rights to members of opposition parties in the Na-
9 tional Assembly and the inexcusable violence per-
10 petrated against opposition legislators inside the leg-
11 islative chambers of Venezuela;

12 (3) commends legislators from other nations in
13 the Americas who have declared their opposition to
14 political irregularities and the use of violence against
15 opposition parliamentarians in Venezuela;

16 (4) urges the Organization of American States
17 to issue a detailed report on any and all irregular-
18 ities resulting from the April 14, 2013, presidential
19 election in Venezuela;

20 (5) urges the United States Ambassador to the
21 Organization of American States to work in concert
22 with other member states to use the full power of
23 the organization in support of meaningful steps to

1 ensure full parliamentary democracy and the rule of
2 law in Venezuela in accordance with the Inter-Amer-
3 ican Democratic Charter, including invoking articles
4 related to unconstitutional interruptions of the
5 democratic order in a member state; and
6 (6) urges the United States Ambassador to the
7 Organization of American States to work in concert
8 with other member states to strengthen the ability
9 of the Organization to protect democratic institu-
10 tions and to respond to the erosion of democracy in
11 member states.