

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4809

To require the Secretary of State to develop a strategy for supporting free and fair elections in Venezuela, to impose sanctions on individuals who are complicit in gross violations of internationally recognized human rights in Venezuela, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 17, 2026

Mr. KAINE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To require the Secretary of State to develop a strategy for supporting free and fair elections in Venezuela, to impose sanctions on individuals who are complicit in gross violations of internationally recognized human rights in Venezuela, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Venezuela Democratic
5 Transition Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

1 (1) the Venezuelan parliamentary election held
2 on December 6, 2020, and the Venezuelan par-
3 liamentary election held on May 25, 2025, were
4 fraudulent and widely condemned;

5 (2) the Venezuelan presidential election held on
6 July 28, 2024, violated Venezuelan law and inter-
7 national standards;

8 (3) the Venezuelan regime led by Nicolás
9 Maduro falsely claimed victory in the 2024 presi-
10 dential election and intensified violent repression
11 against the leaders and supporters of the opposition
12 presidential candidate; and

13 (4) Nicolás Maduro lost the 2024 presidential
14 election and his regime lacks legitimacy to represent
15 the Venezuelan people.

16 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
17 gress that the United States should—

18 (1) continue to recognize Edmundo González
19 Urrutia as Venezuela’s legitimate President-elect;

20 (2) support the democratic opposition;

21 (3) facilitate free and fair presidential elections
22 in 2026 with full opposition participation; and

23 (4) ensure that any energy agreements with
24 Venezuela are made only in consultation with the
25 democratic opposition movement.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) ADMISSION; ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms
4 “admission”, “admitted”, and “alien” have the
5 meanings given such terms in section 101 of the Im-
6 migration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101).

7 (2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
8 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
9 mittees” means—

10 (A) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
11 the Senate;

12 (B) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
13 Senate;

14 (C) the Committee on Banking, Housing,
15 and Urban Affairs of the Senate;

16 (D) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
17 the House of Representatives;

18 (E) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
19 House of Representatives; and

20 (F) the Committee on Financial Services
21 of the House of Representatives.

22 (3) GROSS VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONALLY
23 RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS.—The term “gross vio-
24 lations of internationally recognized human rights”
25 has the meaning given that term in section 502B(d)

1 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C.
2 2304(d)).

3 (4) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term
4 “United States person” means—

5 (A) a United States citizen or an alien law-
6 fully admitted for permanent residence to the
7 United States;

8 (B) an entity organized under the laws of
9 the United States or any jurisdiction within the
10 United States, including a foreign branch of
11 such an entity; or

12 (C) any person located in the United
13 States.

14 (5) VENEZUELAN PERSON.—The term “Ven-
15 ezuelan person” means—

16 (A) a citizen or national of Venezuela; or

17 (B) an entity organized under the laws of
18 Venezuela or otherwise subject to the jurisdic-
19 tion of the Government of Venezuela.

20 **SEC. 4. STRATEGY FOR SUPPORTING FREE AND FAIR ELEC-**
21 **TIONS IN VENEZUELA.**

22 The Secretary of State shall develop and submit to
23 Congress a strategy that—

24 (1) updates, with input from the appropriate
25 congressional committees, the Democratic Transition

1 Framework for Venezuela, which was originally pub-
2 lished by the Department of State on March 31,
3 2020;

4 (2) uses all available diplomatic tools—

5 (A) to facilitate a new presidential election
6 in Venezuela in 2026 that complies with inter-
7 national standards for a free, fair, and trans-
8 parent electoral process;

9 (B) to end the Maduro-Rodriguez regime’s
10 usurpation of presidential authorities;

11 (C) to restore democracy and the rule of
12 law in Venezuela;

13 (D) to free political prisoners and pris-
14 oners of conscience from incarceration in Ven-
15 ezuela; and

16 (E) to facilitate the consistent delivery of
17 humanitarian assistance to the people of Ven-
18 ezuela;

19 (3) outlines benchmarks towards a democratic
20 transition in Venezuela;

21 (4) provides a detailed assessment of Ven-
22 ezuelan government institutions, political prisoners,
23 detention and torture centers, armed groups, and
24 laws used to repress political opposition;

1 (5) outlines the next steps that need to be
2 taken in Venezuela—

3 (A) to coordinate international sanctions;

4 (B) to close torture centers;

5 (C) to ensure the Venezuelan military re-
6 spects the results of free and fair presidential
7 elections;

8 (D) to establish mechanisms for institu-
9 tional reform;

10 (E) to guarantee the safe return of opposi-
11 tion leaders, including María Corina Machado;
12 and

13 (F) to provide pathways for transitional
14 justice and accountability; and

15 (6) requires transparency and monthly report-
16 ing to the appropriate congressional committees with
17 respect to the transition to democracy in Venezuela,
18 including—

19 (A) closely monitoring energy-related nego-
20 tiations; and

21 (B) tracking progress made toward achiev-
22 ing certain democratic benchmarks.

1 **SEC. 5. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO**
2 **HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN VENEZUELA.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose the
4 sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to Ven-
5 ezuelan persons the President determines are complicit in
6 gross violations of internationally recognized human rights
7 in Venezuela.

8 (b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions de-
9 scribed in this subsection are the following:

10 (1) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—The President
11 shall exercise all of the powers granted by the Inter-
12 national Emergency Economic Powers Act (50
13 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block
14 and prohibit all transactions in all property and in-
15 terests in property of a person described in sub-
16 section (a), if such property and interests in prop-
17 erty are in the United States, come within the
18 United States, or are or come within the procession
19 or control of a United States person.

20 (2) ALIENS INADMISSIBLE FOR VISAS, ADMIS-
21 SION, OR PAROLE.—In the case of an alien described
22 in subsection (a), the alien is—

23 (A) inadmissible to the United States;

24 (B) ineligible for a visa or other docu-
25 mentation to enter the United States; and

1 (C) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or
2 paroled into the United States or to receive any
3 other benefit under the Immigration and Na-
4 tionality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

5 (c) EXCEPTIONS.—

6 (1) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF
7 GOODS.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—A requirement to block
9 and prohibit all transactions in all property and
10 interests in property under this section shall not
11 include the authority or a requirement to im-
12 pose sanctions on the importation of goods.

13 (B) GOOD.—In this paragraph, the term
14 “good” means any article, natural or manmade
15 substance, material, supply, or manufactured
16 product, including inspection and test equip-
17 ment, and excluding technical data.

18 (2) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NA-
19 TIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT AND LAW EN-
20 FORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under sub-
21 section (b)(2) shall not apply with respect to the ad-
22 mission of an alien to the United States if admitting
23 or paroling the alien into the United States is nec-
24 essary—

1 (A) to permit the United States to comply
2 with the Agreement regarding the Head-
3 quarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake
4 Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force
5 November 21, 1947, between the United Na-
6 tions and the United States, or other applicable
7 international obligations of the United States;
8 or

9 (B) to carry out or assist authorized law
10 enforcement activity in the United States.

11 (3) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH INTEL-
12 LIGENCE ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under this section
13 shall not apply to any activity subject to the report-
14 ing requirements under title V of the National Secu-
15 rity Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.) or any au-
16 thorized intelligence activities of the United States.

17 (d) WAIVERS.—

18 (1) NATIONAL SECURITY WAIVER.—The Presi-
19 dent may waive the application of sanctions under
20 this section if the President—

21 (A) determines such a waiver is in the na-
22 tional security interests of the United States;
23 and

1 (B) submits to the appropriate congres-
2 sional committees a report on the waiver and
3 the reasons for the waiver.

4 (2) HUMANITARIAN WAIVER.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—Sanctions under this
6 section shall not apply to—

7 (i) the conduct or facilitation of a
8 transaction for the provision of agricultural
9 commodities, food, medicine, medical de-
10 vices, humanitarian assistance, or for hu-
11 manitarian purposes; or

12 (ii) transactions that are necessary for
13 or related to the activities described in
14 clause (i).

15 (B) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

16 (i) AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY.—The
17 term “agricultural commodity” has the
18 meaning given that term in section 102 of
19 the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7
20 U.S.C. 5602).

21 (ii) MEDICAL DEVICE.—The term
22 “medical device” has the meaning given
23 the term “device” in section 201 of the
24 Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21
25 U.S.C. 321).

1 (iii) MEDICINE.—The term “medi-
2 cine” has the meaning given the term
3 “drug” in section 201 of the Federal Food,
4 Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321).

5 (3) DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION.—The President
6 may waive the application of sanctions under this
7 section upon receiving certifications from the Sec-
8 retary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury
9 that a democratic transition has occurred in Ven-
10 ezuela.

11 (e) IMPLEMENTATION; PENALTIES.—

12 (1) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may ex-
13 ercise all authorities provided under sections 203
14 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic
15 Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out
16 this section.

17 (2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, at-
18 tempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a
19 violation of this section or any regulation, license, or
20 order issued to carry out this section shall be subject
21 to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c)
22 of section 206 of the International Emergency Eco-
23 nomic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same ex-

- 1 tent as a person that commits an unlawful act de-
- 2 scribed in subsection (a) of that section.

