

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 224

Calling on the Government of Venezuela to uphold the human rights and civil liberties of the people of Venezuela.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 28, 2005

Mr. FORTUÑO (for himself, Mr. McCOTTER, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. MACK, and Mr. SOUDER) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Calling on the Government of Venezuela to uphold the human rights and civil liberties of the people of Venezuela.

Whereas the United States has traditionally had close relations with Venezuela;

Whereas Venezuela has undergone enormous political changes, including a new constitution, a new unicameral legislature, and even a new name for the country since President Hugo Chávez ascended to power;

Whereas the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) has expressed concern that some of these changes have resulted in a growing concentration of power in the executive branch of government with a tendency to militarize public administration;

Whereas some human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, have expressed concerns about the independence of Venezuela's judiciary with respect to a May 2004 court packing law that expanded the Supreme Court from 20 to 32 justices;

Whereas the Venezuelan Government enacted legislation placing restrictions on broadcast content affecting the full exercise of freedom of expression;

Whereas the Venezuelan Government amended Venezuela's criminal code by broadening laws that punish disrespect for government authorities;

Whereas the Venezuelan Government has investigated and prosecuted several opposition leaders and brought charges against others; and

Whereas there is growing concern by international human rights organizations regarding the deterioration of democratic institutions, threats and intimidations of human rights defenders, illegal wiretapping of private citizens, intimidation of political opponents, and extrajudicial executions of criminal suspects by police: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) expresses its support for the people of Ven-
4 ezuela in their daily struggle for freedom, respect for
5 human rights and civil liberties, democratic self-gov-
6 ernance, and the establishment of the rule of law;

7 (2) calls on the Government of Venezuela to
8 abide by its freely undertaken obligations under

1 international human rights treaties and international
2 humanitarian law to respect and ensure the rights of
3 all individuals, irrespective of their political views;

4 (3) calls on the Government of Venezuela to put
5 an end to all killings, torture, and ill treatment by
6 police and military;

7 (4) encourages the Inter-American Commission
8 of Human Rights (IACHR) to continue to monitor
9 the human rights situation in Venezuela and engage
10 with the Government of Venezuela with respect to
11 the human rights situation in Venezuela;

12 (5) encourages the President and the Secretary
13 of State to reach out to democracy and human
14 rights activists, and the nonviolent democratic oppo-
15 sition in Venezuela, and to assist them in their ef-
16 forts; and

17 (6) urges the adoption and pursuit of these and
18 other policies to support political parties, the rule of
19 law, civil society, and independent media, and other-
20 wise promote democratic accountable government in
21 Venezuela.

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