AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 548

Denouncing the horrors of authoritarianism.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 17, 2025

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

---

RESOLUTION

Denouncing the horrors of authoritarianism.

Whereas authoritarian ideology necessitates a concentration of power that has, time and time again, collapsed democracies into totalitarian rule, kleptocracies, and brutal dictatorships;

Whereas most modern democracies do not die at the hands of armed militias, but instead at the hands of elected officials who erode the separation of powers to tighten their authoritarian grip;

Whereas researchers find that authoritarianism has repeatedly led to lower health outcomes, decreased life expectancy, higher infant mortality, and harmful economic impacts;

Whereas, in Venezuela, Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro dismantled independent institutions, stripped powers

from the elected legislature, repressed opposition parties and civil society, detained political rivals, and presided over a humanitarian and economic collapse under a repressive and authoritarian state;

Whereas, in Turkey, Recep Erdoğan has undermined judicial independence, imprisoned journalists, political opponents, and civil servants on politically motivated charges, closed independent media outlets, and concentrated sweeping authority into the presidency;

Whereas, in Russia, Vladimir Putin eliminated genuine political competition, outlawed major opposition movements, criminalized dissent, oversaw the imprisonment and deaths of prominent political opponents, entrenched a corrupt and repressive authoritarian regime, and launched the illegal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in violation of international law;

Whereas researchers find, ''Free countries across all measures do better than authoritarian regimes in delivering prosperity for their people.'';

Whereas the Constitution of the United States guarantees the separation of powers in the Government and has checks on power that ensure a Government by and for the people rather than authoritarian rule, as such separation of powers is essential;

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press;

Whereas kleptocracies are organized and controlled by top political elites, who raid state resources with immunity and impunity;

Whereas Founding Father and President James Madison wrote, ''The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.''; and

Whereas the United States was founded on the belief in the sanctity of our democracy, undeniable freedoms, independence of each branch of government, and checks and balances on each branch, a belief to which the system of authoritarianism in all of its forms is fundamentally opposed: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate denounces authoritarianism in all its forms and opposes the implementation of authoritarian policies in the United States.

○