

Order 13288 of March 6, 2003, with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2014.

The threat constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. These actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 28, 2014.

□ 1415

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

HOME HEATING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE THROUGH TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2014

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4076) to address shortages and interruptions in the availability of propane and other home heating fuels in the United States, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4076

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Home Heating Emergency Assistance Through Transportation Act of 2014" or the "HHEATT Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. PROPANE AND HOME HEATING FUEL EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a covered emergency exemption issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration shall remain in effect until May 31, 2014, unless the Secretary of Transportation, after consultation with the Governors of affected States, determines that the emergency for which the exemption was provided ends before that date.

(b) COVERED EMERGENCY EXEMPTION DEFINED.—In this section, the term "covered emergency exemption" means an exemption issued under section 390.23 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, or extended under section 390.25 of such title that—

(1) was issued or extended during the period beginning on February 5, 2014, and ending on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) provided regulatory relief for commercial motor vehicle operations providing direct assistance supporting the delivery of propane and home heating fuels.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subsection (a) may be construed to prohibit the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration from issuing or extending a covered emergency exemption beyond May 31, 2014, under other Federal law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 4076.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I was proud to introduce H.R. 4076, the Home Heating Emergency Assistance Through Transportation Act of 2014. This bipartisan legislation will provide relief for millions of Americans suffering from the current propane and home heating fuel emergency.

An exceptionally cold winter has increased demand for propane, which is used for heating approximately 12 million homes in the United States, and for other home-heating fuels. In my district, more than 9,000 households rely on propane for home heating; and across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, there are more than 200,000 households that do the same.

So according to the National Propane Gas Association, supplies are expected to remain tight through the end of the winter because the infrastructure to deliver propane to high-demand areas is insufficient.

On February 5, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration issued a temporary emergency declaration to allow tank truck operators delivering propane and other home heating fuels to drive longer hours in order to speed up deliveries to the affected States. However, these emergency declarations can only last 30 days at a time, creating great uncertainty and limited relief.

Extreme weather conditions are not expected to subside any time soon, threatening the lives and livelihoods of those with homes, farms, and businesses that depend on heat from propane and other home heating fuels. Just yesterday, we saw another severe winter storm.

H.R. 4076 provides a guaranteed extension of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's emergency declaration until May 31, 2014. This certainty is required to address the transportation distribution issues to give

much needed relief to the affected States.

Should the crisis subside prior to May 31, 2014, the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Governors of the affected States, can determine that the guaranteed extension is no longer needed.

I would like to thank the National Propane Gas Association and the New England Fuel Institute for supporting this legislation. I will be entering their letters of support into the RECORD.

This bill has strong bipartisan support, and I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 4076.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

NPGA,
February 25, 2014.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER, On behalf of The National Propane Gas Association (NPGA), I write to share our strong support for your legislation, H.R. 4076, the Home Heating Emergency Assistance Through Transportation (HHEATT) Act of 2014.

NPGA is the national trade association of the propane industry, having a membership of about 3,000 companies, with 39 state and regional associations representing members in all 50 states. The single largest group of NPGA members is retail marketers of propane gas who deliver the fuel to the end user for space heating, water heating and agricultural crop drying, among other applications. NPGA membership also includes propane producers, transporters and wholesalers, as well as manufacturers and distributors of associated equipment and containers. While NPGA's membership covers a broad cross-section of categories, more than 90 percent are designated as small businesses.

As you know, this winter Americans have faced severe supply disruptions in many areas of the country. A convergence of conditions—late wet grain harvest, closed pipeline infrastructure, limited railcars due to alternate service demands—have caused difficulties in delivering propane to consumers during one of the most extreme winters on record.

While the overall supply of propane in the United States is sufficient to meet demand, the propane industry is facing challenges with distribution and transportation. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the U.S. has more than 42 million barrels of propane presently in stock, located predominantly in Mont Belvieu, Texas, where the largest propane storage facility in the world is located. Overcoming the distribution challenges has been most greatly alleviated by temporary emergency declarations issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Administration which provide relief from certain federal motor carrier safety regulations for the Midwest, Eastern, Southern, and portions of the Western Service Centers. Unfortunately, these emergency declarations can only last 30 days at a time which creates uncertainty for our propane suppliers and distributors.

Chairman Shuster, we thank you for your leadership on this bill, and trust Congress will take swift action to pass this important regulatory relief. Thank you.

Sincerely,
RICHARD ROLDAN,
President & Chief Executive Officer,
National Propane Gas Association.

NEFI

February 28, 2014.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: We commend you for the introduction of the Home Heating Emergency Assistance through Transportation or "HHEATT" Act (H.R. 4076) and are writing to endorse this important legislation.

The New England Fuel Institute (NEFI) is the nation's largest independent trade association representing the retail home heating oil industry. Our membership includes more than 1,000 mostly small business home heating oil and Bioheat® dealers and related services companies. Many NEFI members also deliver propane and other home heating fuels and retain nearly around-the-clock drivers and service technicians ready to make emergency fuel deliveries or service home heating systems in the event of an outage.

The severely inclement weather we have experienced this winter has resulted in high residential consumption rates for heating oil. As a result, heating oil dealers are increasingly challenged to resupply customer tanks without interruption and have been in need of waivers from certain regulations such as federal hours-of-service requirements. Emergency declarations issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) help to provide this relief so that heating fuel distributors can move product to where it is needed and expedite deliveries to homes and businesses.

Unfortunately, these declarations are limited to 30 days. This can create uncertainty during extended emergencies such as the long stretch of extreme cold and snowy weather we are currently experiencing. The HHEATT Act would provide added relief and certainty by guaranteeing an extension of emergency declarations through May 31, 2014. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with state Governors, may terminate the guaranteed extension before May 31st only if current emergencies subside.

This bill would provide much needed relief to our member companies and their consumers. We hope for its immediate passage and enactment. Again, thank you for your hard work in this regard.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL C. TRUNZO,
President & CEO.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 4076, a commonsense bill. I would also like to thank the chairman for always striking the proper balance between safety and the smooth operation of commerce, and the gentleman explained it very clearly.

For many of us, especially in rural areas of the Midwest, propane is the fuel of choice for heating their homes, and to get an idea of what happened here, regular folks on a regular budget would spend about \$600 to fill up their tank during the winter.

They got a refill, got a bill, and saw that it was over \$1,900 in some cases. The shock to them was one thing; but then the situation, as the gentleman so clearly stated, was exacerbated by the inability to deliver when we needed it.

And propane, while there are many factors at work here, is not like other commodities in terms of—it is not a nice-to-have thing. It is a necessity.

So the chairman's bill, this bipartisan piece of legislation addresses one of the issues here, making sure we have the trucks on the road to deliver the propane, making sure the supply is enough to start making sure these things are filled until the end of winter, and doing so in a safe manner.

I want to applaud the folks over at the FMCA that did do what they needed to do in issuing some of the waivers, but the gentleman is exactly right. A 30-day waiver is not long enough. Winter is still deep in the Midwest, and we don't need to have the waiver expire on March 15, go through it again, and have the uncertainty.

So this piece of legislation simply does as the gentleman stated. It allows an exemption without sacrificing safety to allow for the movement of propane into the markets where it is most needed, specifically the rural Midwest.

These trucks are coming from Texas. It keeps the people on the roads. It keeps the trucks running. It keeps the propane tanks full, as those things start to happen and the market starts to stabilize a little bit, and the prices will come down.

I do think the gentleman hit on a bigger point here. The infrastructure for the delivery of propane is something we need to look at. This is a short-term emergency measure that will address the problem this winter. We need to look further down the road on some of the long-term solutions on this.

So I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense piece of legislation, support it for all the right reasons, and then join together as we move forward to look at some long-term solutions.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SHUSTER. First, I want to thank the gentleman from Minnesota for his kind remarks. I appreciate it greatly and look forward to continue working together with you on many other legislative endeavors.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. I thank the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for his solid work on this, his bipartisan work, as the gentleman from Minnesota mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Home Heating Emergency Assistance Through Transportation Act, H.R. 4076, which is a short-term, commonsense measure.

This long winter has really hit a lot of families in their wallets and on their budgets, and a shortage of propane has made the cost of home heating even worse for many West Virginians and residents in our surrounding States.

More than 31,000 West Virginia households rely on propane for their heating. More than two-thirds of the propane sold in West Virginia is for residential use, meaning that high prices have a direct impact on our family budgets.

Local suppliers have been forced to short-fill their customers' tanks in order to spread the limited supply of propane among customers in need. Today's legislation will allow these suppliers to operate more efficiently through this spring, allowing them to make more frequent deliveries, and ensure that their customers have an adequate and affordable supply of propane to get them through the rest of the winter.

This bill is the first of five separate pieces of energy legislation the House will consider this week, all having one common thread, to make sure American families have access to affordable and reliable supplies of electricity and heating fuel.

I urge my colleagues to support the HHEATT Act and the other energy bills on the floor this week.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. I now yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN), an important new member of the committee and someone who really knows about infrastructure firsthand because he actually builds it out there in Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. I thank the chairman for this opportunity to speak on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today out of concern for thousands of Americans struggling to heat their homes this winter. The bitter cold has caused an unwellcome rise in heating costs that has resulted in smaller paychecks and financial strain for individuals and organizations across Oklahoma's Second District.

Money is not going as far, especially among low-income families that already find themselves under tight budgets.

Areas that are in dire need of propane to heat their homes are left out in the cold—literally—due to a lack of adequate infrastructure. It is critical that we pass today's HHEATT Act to ensure the issues with heating fuel transportation and distribution are resolved and that relief is finally available.

Fuel costs aren't just numbers on a page. They are factors that critically impact our neighbors, our families, and our friends. The fact is we have a responsibility to maintain our Nation's public safety.

I urge my colleagues to remember your fellow Americans today and help pass this commonsense solution that will provide certainty and will quickly address a critical need.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this act. It is really just common sense, is it not? And I think it

best exemplifies how America handles crises. They adjust. They make an adjustment.

This certainly could be called a heated debate because we are trying to make sure that our constituents have that ability, to heat their homes during one of the longest winters. We don't use the term "polar vortex" back in Pennsylvania. We just call it winter.

It has been a long, long winter, and we are looking at the adjustment that would take place. It is just about transportation. It is about allowing these people that deliver this energy, this propane to these homes.

In Pennsylvania, we have over 180,000 people who rely on the delivery of this product to keep their homes heated. That is not a difficult thing to understand. I think for this body to be able to just on the run—on the fly, as it were—make sure that our constituents have the ability to heat their homes, this is so fundamentally basic, and it is just common sense.

So I thank the chairman for bringing this bill forward. It makes sense to everybody back where I live, as they bundle up and continue to worry about when spring is finally going to get here.

We are able to release that now, change the transportation laws a bit, just so they can get there, and we are saying let's do it until May 31. Let's not do it the way we are doing it now.

Chances are, by May 31, that crisis will be gone, but the ability to get propane to their homes is very critical right now.

So I thank the chairman and ranking member for what they are doing. We are doing things that make sense for the American people, and every single American citizen benefits from this.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank the chairman for a smart piece of legislation. It is simple. It strikes that proper balance between safety on our roads and a smooth flow of commerce.

This is a matter of life and death. It has been a bitter cold winter, as you have heard. 21 people in Minnesota have died as a direct result of the weather. We have 250,000 people who get their heat from propane. Many of them are in rural areas.

I have been in homes across southern Minnesota. These are folks doing everything right, paying the bills, working hard. If they can afford to get the propane, that is one thing. They simply can't get the propane, in some cases.

So this is one first step. Alleviate the crisis. Do it in a safe manner. Get it out there. Start to balance things out. Then move forward because, as we said, again, keeping stability in the heating oil markets is absolutely critical, and we can get this right.

So with that, I congratulate the chairman. I thank him for bringing this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I again thank the gentleman from Minnesota for his work on this.

I also thank the original cosponsor on this bill, Mr. RYAN from Ohio, who may be stuck in the snow out there, or maybe it has slowed down his progress to get to Washington; but the gentleman hails from eastern Ohio, right on the Pennsylvania border.

I know that this is going to impact his district, and I was glad that he and I were able to work together on this commonsense piece of legislation that is going to help hundreds of thousands of people—if not millions of people—all up and down these corridors who have had a very, very difficult winter.

I know that, looking at The Weather Channel or one of the weather stations out in Minnesota, they may need propane until the end of May because of the kind of winter they have had up there. There have been very, very, very cold, extreme weather conditions.

Again, H.R. 4076 provides the ability of the Transportation Department to extend this and help with this crisis and, as we have all said here today, strong bipartisan support; so I would urge all my colleagues today to vote on H.R. 4076.

I now yield 2 minutes to another gentleman from northwestern Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

Mr. LATTA. I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue not only to northwest Ohio, but to the entire Midwest, so I rise today in support of H.R. 4076, the Home Heating Emergency Assistance Through Transportation Act. This legislation will ensure the trucks carrying emergency supplies of propane can be delivered to communities most in need as fast as possible.

My constituents have been at the forefront of the shortage, as many rely on propane to heat their homes and maintain important farming operations. In the face of extreme winter weather, with prolonged periods of negative degree temperatures, access to heat is not a product of comfort, but is a requirement for survival.

Further frustrating is the resulting high prices that are putting pressure on already strained family budgets. While many supply companies are urging customers to take voluntary conservation measures, many families living in my district don't have the option of reducing home heat.

Last Friday when I did get home, I found this letter in my mailbox from a constituent I have known for my entire life. The letter was written by the wife explaining the situation. Her husband, who is almost 96 years old, needs to have their home warmer this winter since he is on a blood thinner.

During the last couple of weeks, they have kept their thermostat at 69 degrees. He has been fully dressed with a hat, gloves, bathrobe, and blankets while at their home. She explains in the letter that they have not had many pleasant days, but they have made it through it.

Another constituent is a young mother with children at home and one

on the way. She cannot keep their home colder, even though it would help save on their next energy bill.

Finally, a small business owner who delivers propane to customers in northwest Ohio has been working day and night to find enough propane to ensure his customers can heat their homes.

□ 1430

In cases where he simply cannot provide enough propane, he has distributed plug-in electric heaters. These actions will keep them warm but will not help when they receive their next energy bill.

These are just a few examples of what is happening throughout the Midwest. The propane shortage has created a very serious crisis that is impacting the most vulnerable members of our society. H.R. 4076 is a step towards providing short-term relief to the communities, families, and small business owners most in need.

I thank the chairman for his leadership on this legislation, and I support the legislation.

Mr. SHUSTER. I thank the gentleman from Ohio and encourage all Members to support H.R. 4076, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4076, the HHEATT Act, that would allow propane to expeditiously move across our country and be delivered to the hundreds of thousands of people who rely on this resource to heat their homes.

It is estimated that 250,000 people in my home state of Wisconsin rely on propane to heat their homes. Today, the temperature in my hometown of Fond du Lac is 11 degrees, with a high of 20 and a low of 6 degrees. The wind chill brings these temperatures down to the single digits and below zero. This is the way it's been for much of the winter during this exceptionally cold winter.

Don't get me wrong, I'm from Wisconsin, we're used to the cold.

But when you get home from work and you are unable to afford or even obtain the propane needed to heat your home, we have a serious problem. There are many factors that have contributed to the propane shortage we're now facing, and I am not here to list them all.

My home state of Wisconsin and the utility companies that serve us have been going to great lengths to assist those who are running low on propane and seek out additional supplies as far south as Texas to get them to the people that need them.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has temporarily suspended hours-of-service regulations for truck drivers carrying propane so supplies can make it where they need to go in an expedited manner. But these suspensions have been renewed in 30 day increments.

Mr. Speaker, this bill simply continues the emergency suspension of federal hours-of-service requirements for truck drivers carrying propane through the end of May. It allows the transportation of propane to continue uninterrupted by federal rules that could literally be the difference between someone sleeping in a house with heat or without it. We are making progress in resolving this shortage, but this legislation would provide certainty for thousands in my district through the rest of the

cold season that they will be able to receive this valuable resource to heat their home.

I thank my colleague and Transportation Committee Chairman BILL SHUSTER for introducing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4076.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA AS THEY PROTEST PEACEFULLY FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 488) supporting the people of Venezuela as they protest peacefully for democratic change and calling to end the violence, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 488

Whereas the United States Government should support the rule of law, and free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy in Venezuela, condemning violence and intimidation against the country's political opposition, and calling for dialogue between all political actors in the country;

Whereas, on February 12, 2014, also known in Venezuela as the National Youth Day, students began protesting in several cities Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro's inability to stem violent crime, his undemocratic actions, and a rapidly deteriorating economy marked by high inflation and shortages of consumer goods;

Whereas, on February 12, 2014, a judge issued an arrest warrant for Leopoldo López, leader of the opposition party Voluntad Popular, for unfounded allegations in connection with the student protests;

Whereas, on February 17, 2014, the Government of Venezuela notified the United States Department of State that it had declared 3 consular officers at the United States Embassy in Venezuela *personae non gratae*;

Whereas over the last year, the Government of Venezuela has expelled a total of 8 United States Government officials from Venezuela;

Whereas, on February 18, 2014, opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez turned himself in to Venezuelan authorities, was arrested, and charged with criminal incitement, conspiracy, arson, and intent to damage property;

Whereas Leopoldo Lopez is currently being held in a prison at a military facility;

Whereas nongovernmental human rights organizations have alleged that the charges brought against Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo López appear to be a politically motivated attempt to silence dissent in the country;

Whereas the Venezuelan Government has blocked users' online images as opposition groups marched through Caracas;

Whereas the Venezuelan people have been protesting economic, social, and political

concerns facing their country, including corruption, rising inflation rates, shortages of everyday products, increasing crime rates, and the erosion of human rights and respect for political dissent;

Whereas, on February 19, 2014, President Barack Obama criticized the Venezuelan Government for arresting protesters, called for their release, and urged the government to focus on the "legitimate grievances of the Venezuelan people";

Whereas, as of February 26, 2014, there have been 14 people killed, over 100 injured, and many persons unjustly detained in relation to pro-democracy demonstrations throughout Venezuela;

Whereas Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro threatened to expel the United States news network CNN from Venezuela and has taken off the air the Colombian news channel NTN 24, which transmits in Venezuela, after news outlets reported on the nation-wide protests;

Whereas the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights released a statement on February 14, 2014, which "expresses its concern over the serious incidents of violence that have taken place in the context of protest demonstrations in Venezuela, as well as other complaints concerning acts of censorship against media outlets, attacks on organizations that defend human rights, and acts of alleged political persecution"; and

Whereas as a member of the Organization of American States and signatory to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Government of Venezuela has agreed to abide by the principles of constitutional, representative democracy, which include free and fair elections and adherence to its own constitution: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the people of Venezuela in their pursuit of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly to promote democratic principles in Venezuela;

(2) deplores acts which constitute a disregard for the rule of law, the inexcusable violence perpetrated against opposition leaders and protesters in Venezuela, and the growing efforts to use politically motivated criminal charges to intimidate the country's political opposition;

(3) urges responsible nations throughout the international community to stand in solidarity with the people of Venezuela and to actively encourage a process of dialogue between the Government of Venezuela and the political opposition to end the violence;

(4) urges the United States Department of State to work in concert with other countries in the Americas to take meaningful steps to ensure that basic fundamental freedoms in Venezuela are in accordance with the Inter-American Democratic Charter and to strengthen the ability of the Organization of American States (OAS) to respond to the erosion of democratic norms and institutions in Venezuela;

(5) urges the Organization of American States and its Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to utilize its good offices and all mechanisms at its disposal to seek the most effective way to expeditiously end the violence in Venezuela in accordance with the Inter-American Democratic Charter; and

(6) supports efforts by international and multilateral organizations to urge the Venezuelan Government to adopt measures to guarantee the rights to life, humane treatment, and security, and the political freedoms of assembly, association, and expression to all of the people of Venezuela.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the

gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 488 signals U.S. support for the people of Venezuela as they protest peacefully for democracy in the face of Nicolas Maduro's violent repression and his crackdown on those who express their opposition to his regime's failed policies.

We must take a clear stand because the Maduro regime has responded in a deeply undemocratic manner by forcibly repressing protesters, attempting to silence critics by blocking media outlets, and even authorizing the arrests of key opposition leaders such as Leopoldo Lopez.

As protests have swelled throughout the country, the actions of regime forces have led to the deaths of at least 15 and to the unjust detention of more than 100 freedom seekers.

It is incumbent upon the Organization of American States, the OAS, to act according to the principles of its Inter-American Democratic Charter and address this crisis of democracy. Yet recent history has shown us that the Secretary General of the OAS will not lead the way in this important effort. Thus, in the absence of his leadership, responsible nations in the hemisphere must act. They cannot remain silent.

The Panamanians have stepped up to the plate. They have proposed a ministerial meeting at the OAS, but regrettably, Mr. Speaker, that proposal has not moved forward. This resolution will send a clear message to the OAS and to Nicolas Maduro that the United States condemns these undemocratic actions.

We see the plight of the people of Venezuela, and we stand on their side in the struggle for democratic change. We stand together with the Women for Life, Mujeres por la Vida, who march clad in white through the streets of Venezuela peacefully, like their companions in the struggle for freedom in Cuba—Las Damas de Blanco, the Ladies in White.

We stand with the students who take to the streets demanding the release of their fellow students who have been unjustly detained, only to be met with the clubs and the teargas of Maduro's henchmen. And we stand together, Mr. Speaker, united with the people of Venezuela who wish to cast the yoke of repression and oppression and the influence of the Castro regime, which has