

“(A) includes any action or activity undertaken by a person regulated by a State insurance regulator or a regulated foreign subsidiary or regulated foreign affiliate of such person, as those actions relate to the provision of insurance, or other activities necessary to engage in the business of insurance; and

“(B) does not include any action or activity, including any financial activity, that is not regulated by a State insurance regulator or a foreign agency or authority and subject to State insurance capital requirements or, in the case of a regulated foreign subsidiary or regulated foreign affiliate, capital requirements imposed by a foreign insurance regulatory authority.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) CLARIFICATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In establishing the minimum leverage capital requirements and minimum risk-based capital requirements on a consolidated basis for a depository institution holding company or a nonbank financial company supervised by the Board of Governors as required under paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b), the appropriate Federal banking agencies shall not be required to include, for any purpose of this section (including in any determination of consolidation), a person regulated by a State insurance regulator or a regulated foreign subsidiary or a regulated foreign affiliate of such person engaged in the business of insurance, to the extent that such person acts in its capacity as a regulated insurance entity.

“(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION ON BOARD’S AUTHORITY.—This subsection shall not be construed to prohibit, modify, limit, or otherwise supersede any other provision of Federal law that provides the Board of Governors authority to issue regulations and orders relating to capital requirements for depository institution holding companies or nonbank financial companies supervised by the Board of Governors.

“(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION ON ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A depository institution holding company or nonbank financial company supervised by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve that is also a person regulated by a State insurance regulator that is engaged in the business of insurance that files financial statements with a State insurance regulator or the National Association of Insurance Commissioners utilizing only Statutory Accounting Principles in accordance with State law, shall not be required by the Board under the authority of this section or the authority of the Home Owners’ Loan Act to prepare such financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

“(B) PRESERVATION OF AUTHORITY.—Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall limit the authority of the Board under any other applicable provision of law to conduct any regulatory or supervisory activity of a depository institution holding company or nonbank financial company supervised by the Board of Governors, including the collection or reporting of any information on an entity or group-wide basis. Nothing in this paragraph shall excuse the Board from its obligations to comply with section 161(a) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (12 U.S.C. 5361(a)) and section 10(b)(2) of the Home Owners’ Loan Act (12 U.S.C. 1467a(b)(2)), as appropriate.”.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VENEZUELA DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ACT OF 2014

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2142) to impose targeted sanctions on persons responsible for violations of human rights of antigovernment protesters in Venezuela, to strengthen civil society in Venezuela, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2142

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 “Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Central Bank of Venezuela and the National Statistical Institute of Venezuela stated that the annual inflation rate in Venezuela in 2013 was 56.30, the highest level of inflation in the Western Hemisphere and the third highest level of inflation in the world behind South Sudan and Syria.

(2) The Central Bank of Venezuela and the Government of Venezuela have imposed a series of currency controls that has exacerbated economic problems and, according to the World Economic Forum, has become the most problematic factor for doing business in Venezuela.

(3) The Central Bank of Venezuela declared that the scarcity index of Venezuela reached 29.4 percent in March 2014, which signifies that fewer than one in 4 basic goods is unavailable at any given time. The Central Bank has not released any information on the scarcity index since that time.

(4) Since 1999, violent crime in Venezuela has risen sharply and the Venezuelan Violence Observatory, an independent nongovernmental organization, found the national per capita murder rate to be 79 per 100,000 people in 2013.

(5) The international nongovernmental organization Human Rights Watch recently stated, “Under the leadership of President Chávez and now President Maduro, the accumulation of power in the executive branch and the erosion of human rights guarantees have enabled the government to intimidate, censor, and prosecute its critics.”

(6) The Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 of the Department of State maintained that in Venezuela “the government did not respect judicial independence or permit judges to act according to the law without fear of retaliation” and “the government used the judiciary to intimidate and selectively prosecute political, union, business, and civil society leaders who were critical of government policies or actions”.

(7) The Government of Venezuela has detained foreign journalists and threatened and expelled international media outlets operating in Venezuela, and the international nongovernmental organization Freedom House declared that Venezuela’s “media climate is permeated by intimidation, sometimes including physical attacks, and strong antimedia rhetoric by the government is common”.

(8) Since February 4, 2014, the Government of Venezuela has responded to antigovernment protests with violence and killings perpetrated by its public security forces.

(9) In May 2014, Human Rights Watch found that the unlawful use of force perpetrated

against antigovernment protesters was “part of a systematic practice by the Venezuelan security forces”.

(10) As of September 1, 2014, 41 people had been killed, approximately 3,000 had been arrested unjustly, and more than 150 remained in prison and faced criminal charges as a result of antigovernment demonstrations throughout Venezuela.

(11) Opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez was arrested on February 18, 2014, in relation to the protests and was unjustly charged with criminal incitement, conspiracy, arson, and property damage. Since his arrest, Lopez has been held in solitary confinement and has been denied 58 out of 60 of his proposed witnesses at his ongoing trial.

(12) As of September 1, 2014, not a single member of the public security forces of the Government of Venezuela had been held accountable for acts of violence perpetrated against antigovernment protesters.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING ANTIGOVERNMENT PROTESTS IN VENEZUELA AND THE NEED TO PREVENT FURTHER VIOLENCE IN VENEZUELA.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the United States aspires to a mutually beneficial relationship with Venezuela based on respect for human rights and the rule of law and a functional and productive relationship on issues of public security, including counternarcotics and counterterrorism;

(2) the United States supports the people of Venezuela in their efforts to realize their full economic potential and to advance representative democracy, human rights, and the rule of law within their country;

(3) the chronic mismanagement by the Government of Venezuela of its economy has produced conditions of economic hardship and scarcity of basic goods and foodstuffs for the people of Venezuela;

(4) the failure of the Government of Venezuela to guarantee minimal standards of public security for its citizens has led the country to become one of the most violent and corrupt in the world;

(5) the Government of Venezuela continues to take steps to remove checks and balances on the executive, politicize the judiciary, undermine the independence of the legislature through use of executive decree powers, persecute and prosecute its political opponents, curtail freedom of the press, and limit the free expression of its citizens;

(6) Venezuelans, responding to ongoing economic hardship, high levels of crime and violence, and the lack of basic political rights and individual freedoms, have turned out in demonstrations in Caracas and throughout the country to protest the failure of the Government of Venezuela to protect the political and economic well-being of its citizens; and

(7) the repeated use of violence perpetrated by the National Guard and security personnel of Venezuela, as well as persons acting on behalf of the Government of Venezuela, against antigovernment protesters that began on February 4, 2014, is intolerable and the use of unprovoked violence by protesters is also a matter of serious concern.

SEC. 4. UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD VENEZUELA.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to support the people of Venezuela in their aspiration to live under conditions of peace and representative democracy as defined by the Inter-American Democratic Charter of the Organization of American States;

(2) to work in concert with the other member states within the Organization of American States, as well as the countries of the European Union, to ensure the peaceful resolution of the current situation in Venezuela

and the immediate cessation of violence against antigovernment protestors;

(3) to hold accountable government and security officials in Venezuela responsible for or complicit in the use of force in relation to antigovernment protests and similar future acts of violence; and

(4) to continue to support the development of democratic political processes and independent civil society in Venezuela.

SEC. 5. SANCTIONS ON PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENCE IN VENEZUELA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to any foreign person, including any current or former official of the Government of Venezuela or any person acting on behalf of that Government, that the President determines—

(1) has perpetrated, or is responsible for ordering or otherwise directing, significant acts of violence or serious human rights abuses in Venezuela against persons associated with the antigovernment protests in Venezuela that began on February 4, 2014;

(2) has ordered or otherwise directed the arrest or prosecution of a person in Venezuela primarily because of the person's legitimate exercise of freedom of expression or assembly; or

(3) has knowingly materially assisted, sponsored, or provided significant financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, the commission of acts described in paragraph (1) or (2).

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(A) ASSET BLOCKING.—The exercise of all powers granted to the President by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of a person determined by the President to be subject to subsection (a) if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(B) EXCLUSION FROM THE UNITED STATES AND REVOCATION OF VISA OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.—In the case of an alien determined by the President to be subject to subsection (a), denial of a visa to, and exclusion from the United States of, the alien, and revocation in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)), of any visa or other documentation of the alien.

(2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of paragraph (1)(A) or any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out paragraph (1)(A) shall be subject to the penalties set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

(3) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—The requirement to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property under paragraph (1)(A) shall not include the authority to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(4) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions under paragraph (1)(B) shall not apply to an alien if admitting the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United

States, or other applicable international obligations.

(c) WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of sanctions under subsection (b) with respect to a person if the President—

(1) determines that such a waiver is in the national interest of the United States; and

(2) on or before the date on which the waiver takes effect, submits to the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Banking Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a notice of and justification for the waiver.

(d) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The President shall issue such regulations, licenses, and orders as are necessary to carry out this section.

(e) TERMINATION.—The requirement to impose sanctions under this section shall terminate on December 31, 2016.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms “admitted” and “alien” have the meanings given those terms in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101).

(2) FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term “financial institution” has the meaning given that term in section 5312 of title 31, United States Code.

(3) FOREIGN PERSON.—The term “foreign person” means a person that is not a United States person.

(4) GOOD.—The term “good” has the meaning given that term in section 16 of the Export Administration Act of 1979 (50 U.S.C. App. 2415) (as continued in effect pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.)).

(5) KNOWINGLY.—The term “knowingly”, with respect to conduct, a circumstance, or a result, means that a person has actual knowledge, or should have known, of the conduct, the circumstance, or the result.

(6) MATERIALLY ASSISTED.—The term “materially assisted” means the provision of assistance that is significant and of a kind directly relevant to acts described in paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (a).

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

(A) a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence to the United States; or

(B) an entity organized under the laws of the United States or of any jurisdiction within the United States, including a foreign branch of such an entity.

SEC. 6. REPORT ON BROADCASTING, INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION, AND CIRCUMVENTION TECHNOLOGY DISTRIBUTION IN VENEZUELA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (in this section referred to as the “Board”) shall submit to Congress a report that includes—

(1) a thorough evaluation of the governmental, political, and technological obstacles faced by the people of Venezuela in their efforts to obtain accurate, objective, and comprehensive news and information about domestic and international affairs;

(2) an assessment of current efforts relating to broadcasting, information distribution, and circumvention technology distribution in Venezuela, by the United States Government and otherwise; and

(3) a strategy for expanding such efforts in Venezuela, including recommendations for additional measures to expand upon current efforts.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an assessment of the current level of Federal funding dedicated to broadcasting,

information distribution, and circumvention technology distribution in Venezuela by the Board before the date of the enactment of this Act;

(2) an assessment of the extent to which the current level and type of news and related programming and content provided by the Voice of America and other sources is addressing the informational needs of the people of Venezuela; and

(3) recommendations for increasing broadcasting, information distribution, and circumvention technology distribution in Venezuela.

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

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, it is fitting that today, International Human Rights Day, we consider and debate the bill before us: the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act. The House unanimously passed a similar measure that I authored and introduced earlier this year, and I urge passage of this measure before us presented by Senators MENENDEZ and RUBIO.

The people of Venezuela, Mr. Speaker, have been crying out for help. They have been begging the United States and all responsible nations to help protect them against the tyranny and brutality under the Maduro regime, the puppets of the oppressive Castro regime in Cuba. I should point out that today, International Human Rights Day, the Castro thugs rounded up and imprisoned 52 human rights activists.

Today, Congress speaks in a unified and bipartisan voice. The human rights situation in Venezuela has actually gotten worse under Maduro since the death of that other Castro sycophant, Hugo Chavez. In fact, since February 12, 2014, also known as National Youth Day in Venezuela, the freedom-seeking people of Venezuela have risen up to challenge the abuses and undemocratic actions being committed by Nicolas Maduro and his lackeys, demanding their most basic and fundamental rights.

Naturally, oppressors have but one option which they never fail to resort to; and Maduro, as we knew he would, responded with a violent crackdown against those who had the courage to challenge his authoritarian rule.

Ever since the peaceful demonstrations against the regime began on National Youth Day, 42 people have been

killed, there have been nearly 60 reported cases of torture, and 72 students remain jailed to this day.

Pro-democracy leaders have raised their voices against the abuses of the regime, and they have been persecuted with politically-motivated charges, and those arrested face indescribable cruelty in prison.

□ 1830

Leopoldo Lopez, one of the faces of the democratic opposition, continues to be imprisoned in a military facility. Leopoldo is continuously denied visitors, and his legal proceedings, such as they are, are plagued with irregularities.

Daniel Ceballos, the mayor of the city of San Cristobal, was impeached and arrested by the Maduro thugs earlier this year. Daniel's only crime was to defend his constituents from the repressive abuses of the National Guard deployed to violently quash them.

But these cases, sadly, Mr. Speaker, are not isolated. Earlier this year, Maria Corina Machado, a courageous woman and vocal opposition leader, came to Washington, D.C., came to the United States to speak in front of the Organization of American States on the tragic situation in her homeland of Venezuela. The OAS, the Organization of American States, is a body that is supposed to uphold and protect the democratic charter and human rights in the Americas.

Maria Corina was blocked by Castro sympathizers, Maduro sympathizers, and their cronies, and she was prevented from even addressing this body. And when she returned home, what happened to Maria Corina Machado? She was illegally stripped of her position in the Venezuelan National Assembly because she dared to speak out against the regime and in favor of human rights.

But the problems of Venezuela go beyond these democratic abuses. Nicolas Maduro's inability to contain a spiraling hyperinflationary economy, marked by shortages of consumer goods, along with a skyrocketing crime rate creates a difficult, almost unbearable situation for Venezuelans to endure.

The legislation before us targets Venezuelan officials responsible for the perpetration of human rights abuses against the citizens of Venezuela. And how do we do that? We deny them visas. We block their property. We freeze their assets here in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, the distress signal sent to us by the people of Venezuela did not just start in February. For years, the Venezuelan people have been calling out for help, asking us for our assistance, for us to do something, anything that will help stop the terrible human rights abuses of the authoritarian thug Chavez, and now his Mini-Me, Maduro.

Sadly, our administration has been deafeningly silent, embarrassingly si-

lent. It has turned a blind eye to the harsh and brutal reality in Venezuela, has been afraid to speak out and take action against Chavez, and, until now, has been far too afraid to challenge Maduro.

But the United States Congress will act, Mr. Speaker. Let's send a strong signal tonight—not only to the administration, but to the people of Venezuela—that the United States Congress hears, sees, and feels their suffering, and we will not allow their anguish to go unobstructed.

The United States cannot ignore its responsibilities, and we must answer the calls for freedom, for democracy around the globe. We must be the voice for those who are being silenced by their oppressive regimes, and we must stand for the values that we believe in—not just here at home, but everywhere.

Mr. Speaker, by passing this bill and sending it to the President's desk, we will do just that.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 10, 2014.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for agreeing to forgo a referral request and committee consideration of S. 2142, the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the Floor.

I agree that your forgoing action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future.

I will seek to place this letter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on the Judiciary as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 10, 2014.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING: Thank you for agreeing to forgo a referral request and committee consideration of S. 2142, the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the Floor.

I agree that your forgoing action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Financial Services, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future.

I will seek to place this letter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on Financial Services as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 2142, the Venezuelan Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN—thank you for your leadership on this—and also Senator MENENDEZ for his leadership on this legislation. I also want to thank, once again, Chairman ROYCE, who has approached this issue in a bipartisan way, as he always does.

Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN's bill passed the House unanimously in May, and I am pleased that we are now ready to send this bill to the President's desk.

The world has watched closely over the last year as Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro has stifled the democratic aspirations of the Venezuelan people. Peaceful protesters seeking basic rights and dignity have been met with violence. Forty-two people were tragically killed and 800 were injured on both sides of the conflict. We mourn all of their losses. At the same time, the Maduro government has arrested political opponents and stood in the way of a free press.

Nearly 10 minutes after his arrest, opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez remains in jail on trumped-up charges. The U.N. Committee Against Torture, seven former Latin American Presidents, and the leaders around the world have called for Leopoldo's release.

Last week, Venezuelan opposition leader and former National Assembly Deputy Maria Corina Machado was charged for conspiring to assassinate President Maduro, another desperate move by a desperate government. Maduro's government even considers the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia in on this bizarre conspiracy. It would be humorous if it wasn't so sad and dangerous.

The legislation that we are considering today makes it clear that Congress will not turn a blind eye to the human rights violations in Venezuela. By stripping human rights violators of their visas, we are saying that those responsible for abuses in Venezuela are not welcome in the United States. By freezing their assets, we are making it clear that those who violate human rights in Venezuela won't have access to financial institutions in the United States.

Venezuela's leaders will say this bill is going to hurt the average Venezuelan citizen. That is nonsense. These sanctions won't touch the oil sector or other vital parts of the Venezuelan economy. They only affect those complicit in the recent crackdowns.

Finally, I will note that this bill gives President Obama needed flexibility to respond to events on the ground in Venezuela. Each and every sanction in this bill can be waived by the President at any time.

Let's stand with the people of Venezuela and support the immediate passage of S. 2142.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to thank and congratulate the vibrant Venezuelan American community in our area in south Florida and, indeed, throughout our great Nation for never forgetting the suffering of their native lands. They have many family members in Venezuela, and they care deeply about what happens in their homeland.

Now they have adopted America as their homeland and they are proud Americans, but they are also very proud of their traditions. It is because of their desire to go back to a Venezuela one day—that will be free, that will be democratic, that will respect the human rights—that we are here today fighting on their behalf. So thanks to our constituents for making this day a reality.

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

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to thank my colleague and the gentlewoman from south Florida, who has really been a passionate advocate and whom I have stood in solidarity with on this and so many other issues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014. I do so as the proud representative of Westonzuela, my hometown, and one in which we have an incredibly rich and vibrant community of Venezuelans and Venezuelan Americans. As the representative of one of the largest communities of Venezuelans and Venezuelan Americans in the United States, I am here to strongly speak out against the continued, unconscionable abuses of the Maduro government against innocent citizens.

Earlier this year, facing a repressive government and crushing economic conditions, thousands of Venezuelans peacefully protested to demand their basic human rights and dignity. In response, President Maduro and his security forces brutally suppressed their own citizens in the streets and used the judiciary to squash voices championing freedom of expression and democracy. Although President Maduro has tried to further silence these voices by limiting media coverage of the ongoing oppression and repression and terrible economic conditions of his country, we can still hear the demands for justice and for dignity.

This bill would impose sanctions on those individuals in Maduro's regime who have ordered the arrest or prosecution of anyone exercising their right to peacefully assemble or protest, or

those who supported those actions. Through our action here today, we signify the determination of the American people to stand for freedom and democracy, and this bill reinforces the sentiments and actions of the U.S. Congress and the Obama administration.

Along with my colleagues, I stand in solidarity with those brave Venezuelans continuing to advocate for their rights, including opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, who outrageously remains in prison. I look forward to this measure's passage and to President Obama's signature, and working with the Obama administration and our allies to hold these perpetrators of the injustice accountable for their crimes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In closing, I would like to emphasize, once again, that today's legislation is consistent with our treatment of human rights violators throughout the world.

Will this legislation all of a sudden turn President Maduro and his government into great respecters of human rights? None of us are naive enough to believe this, but what it will do is it will send a message to human rights violators in Venezuela and throughout the world that your visas and your assets in U.S. financial institutions are in peril if you abuse individuals' human rights.

I once again urge my colleagues to support the immediate passage of S. 2142.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to thank our entire south Florida congressional delegation. All of us worked together in a bipartisan way to get this bill to this moment.

I would especially like to thank Senator BOB MENENDEZ, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, along with our own Florida Senator whom we are so proud of, MARCO RUBIO, for their hard work on this bill and, really, for their work on the broader issues of the lack of democracy in our hemisphere, the disrespect for human rights, the lack of the rule of law.

Sadly, in our Western Hemisphere, instead of seeing advances of human rights and advances of democracy, we have seen a sad erosion in these years. We thank all of the Members for always using these esteemed floors to talk about our basic values that we share with our hemispheric neighbors, and that is respect for human rights, respect for democracy, respect for the rule of law, and always to continue to do everything we can to make sure that all of our oppressed brothers and sisters will live in freedom, the freedom that we enjoy so much.

I thank very much our chairman of our Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr.

ROYCE, for his help and his leadership in this fight.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2142.

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.

GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 2014

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5656) to authorize the Feed the Future Initiative to reduce global poverty and hunger in developing countries on a sustainable basis, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5656

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 "Global Food Security Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY OBJECTIVES; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY OBJECTIVES.—It is in the national security interest of the United States to promote global food security and nutrition, consistent with national food security investment plans, which is reinforced through programs, activities, and initiatives that—

(1) accelerate inclusive, agricultural-led economic growth that reduces global poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, particularly among women and children;

(2) increase the productivity, incomes, and livelihoods of small-scale producers, especially women, by working across agricultural value chains and expanding producer access to local and international markets;

(3) build resilience to food shocks among vulnerable populations and households while reducing reliance upon emergency food assistance;

(4) create an enabling environment for agricultural growth and investment, including through the promotion of secure and transparent property rights;

(5) improve the nutritional status of women and children, with a focus on reducing child stunting, including through the promotion of highly nutritious foods, diet diversification, and nutritional behaviors that improve maternal and child health;

(6) align with and leverage broader United States investments in trade, economic growth, science and technology, maternal and child health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene; and

(7) ensure the effective use of United States taxpayer dollars to further these objectives.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the President, in providing assistance to implement the Global Food Security Strategy, should—

(1) coordinate, through a whole-of-government approach, the efforts of relevant Federal departments and agencies to implement the Global Food Security Strategy;