

campaign, further empowering the regime, prolonging oppression and genocide and propping terrorism and narco-trafficking in the region.

President Biden has a historic opportunity to be a part of the recovery of democracy in Venezuela and to stand up for freedom and democracy—values that define us as Americans.

I am here today to ask unanimous consent for the passage of a resolution where the Senate recognizes Maria Corina Machado as Venezuela's official Presidential opposition candidate and commends her for standing up against Maduro and leading the charge for freedom and democracy in Venezuela—that is not easy; condemns efforts by the illegitimate Maduro regime to prevent Maria Corina Machado, Venezuela's duly chosen official Presidential opposition candidate, from participating in Venezuela's Presidential election of 2024; rejects the illegitimate Maduro regime's efforts to carry out fraudulent Presidential elections by barring the participation of the opposition candidate chosen by the Venezuelan voters; demands that the illegitimate Maduro regime permits election observers from the OAS, the European Union, the International Republican Institute, and the National Democratic Institute; calls on the illegitimate Maduro regime to immediately release all political prisoners, including all U.S. citizens; denounces efforts by the illegitimate Maduro regime to persecute members of the National Primary Commission; calls on the U.S. Government and the international community to institute greater pressure and tighten sanctions against the illegitimate Maduro regime in order to restore freedom in Venezuela.

This is common sense, but more importantly, it is the right thing to do for America's national security and unapologetic support of freedom and democracy for all people.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in Spanish.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. (English translation of statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

More than 2 million Venezuelans voted for a change, and Maduro or his illegitimate supreme court will not change that. Biden and the international community must recognize Maria Corina as the legitimate leader of the Venezuelan opposition and work with her to recover democracy and freedom in Venezuela.

I have been very clear: No deal should be made with Maduro and no sanctions can be lifted until we know Maria Corina is allowed to run and the elections are completely free and transparent, not backward.

Mr. President, I am thankful for the support of my colleague from Florida, Senator RUBIO, and the companion resolution being introduced in the House by Congressman DIAZ-BALART.

I urge all my colleagues to adopt this important resolution today.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 486, which is at the desk. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, first, I want to thank my colleague from Florida for bringing this issue to the floor. I have spoken frequently about the tragedies of the Maduro regime, the protracted political, economic, and human rights crisis that has been caused by the Maduro regime. Seven million Venezuelans have left their homes. The Maduro regime is under investigation for crimes against humanity. The list goes on and on and on.

I have the opportunity to chair the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This is a resolution that should go through our committee. Our committee should have an opportunity to review and offer suggestions as to what should be included and how it is worded. For that reason alone, I would have concern about how it is moving forward.

But let me add just a few more parts to this. I support the administration's efforts to pursue diplomatic engagement. By strategically leveraging U.S. sanctions, the administration has empowered Venezuela's democratic opposition in its negotiations with this regime.

We impose sanctions so that we can get changes of actions of those whom we impose the sanctions against. When we see progress in that regard, we should be willing to modify or eliminate those sanctions.

On October 17, in Barbados, the Unitary Platform and the Maduro regime reached an agreement. They created a roadmap for more competitive Presidential elections next year.

By supporting this agreement, the Biden administration has provided political space for the political opposition to hold primaries on October 22. The results were resounding, as my colleague from Florida has pointed out. Maria Corina Machado won the opposition primaries with over 90 percent of the vote. That is an impressive victory. This is the kind of progress that has been desperately needed to help restore democracy in Venezuela.

Of course, the Maduro regime has sought to undermine the results of the primary. We are not surprised by that. The Biden administration has made it clear that if Maduro doesn't allow the candidate to run, they will reimpose the sanctions. That is how it should work. And if it does not release the political prisoners or wrongly detained Americans, the United States will snap back our sanctions. We have made that very clear. We want our political pris-

oners and wrongfully detained Americans released immediately. They should never have been detained. We want to make sure there is a competitive election in Venezuela, and if it is not, we will reimpose our sanctions. And I have called for these competitive elections.

As I pointed out, this resolution has not been considered by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It comes as negotiations remain underway and some initial advancements have taken place. It seeks to dictate actions to the administration as sensitive diplomatic negotiations are ongoing.

The Biden administration has already stated publicly it will reimpose sanctions if the Maduro regime does not follow through on their commitment. We don't trust them—believe me, we don't—and we have the opportunity to reimpose those sanctions.

We must maintain the diplomatic space needed to advance democratic elections. That is our objective. Our objective is to get democratic elections and to secure the release of wrongfully detained Americans and political prisoners.

So I would suggest to my colleague to submit his resolution for consideration to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. That is why we have the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Give us a chance for the input of those of us who have been working on this Venezuelan issue for a long time. Give us the opportunity for input. That is how the system is supposed to work.

I give my colleague the assurances—I want to take this up in the Foreign Relations Committee. I want to see a resolution passed on the floor of the Senate in regard to what is happening in Venezuela, and I certainly will work with my colleague in that regard.

For the reasons I have stated, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for his comments about the importance of making sure that we get free and fair elections in Venezuela. It sounds like this is just a procedural issue. There doesn't appear to be—right now, at least—any issue over the substance of the resolution.

I look forward to my colleague scheduling a Foreign Relations Committee markup for this important resolution. Hopefully, we will get to the point where we have real, free, and fair elections. Hopefully, we will get to the point where we get these Americans back. Hopefully, all the things that I think both of us care about are going to happen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH H. RICHARD

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, shortly, we will be voting on Elizabeth Richard to be the State Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the motion in regard to invoking cloture. I speak

in favor of her nomination as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

We need someone at the helm of our civilian and diplomatic efforts on counterterrorism who has the experience of working in some of the most dangerous and challenging environments. We need someone who is qualified to direct and successfully implement the Department's counterterrorism programs and who can work hand in hand with the Department of Defense on counterterrorism issues. We also need someone who has proven they will stand up for American values.

The threat from terrorism has not gone away but has changed dramatically. Not only has terrorism spread across more countries, but today it takes on a different form.

Protecting our Nation from the evolving counterterrorism threat is absolutely critical to the security of the United States. That is why we must have an experienced leader at the helm of the Bureau of Counterterrorism and why we must confirm Ambassador Richard without delay.

Ambassador Richard has over three decades of experience in the Foreign Service. She has served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State; as Deputy Chief of Mission in Yemen; as Border Coordinator in Pakistan; and as Ambassador to Lebanon—a career diplomat who has served our Nation. Throughout her tenure, she has led efforts with our partners and allies to confront the challenges from terrorist groups.

Ambassador Richard's nomination was reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by a voice vote. She has overwhelming endorsements from military and civilian leaders alike, including the support of some of our most experienced and senior national security officials, from General Votel, retired four-star general and former commander of Special Operations Command and Central Command; to General Nagata, former commander of Special Operations Command Central and Director of Strategy for the National Counterterrorism Center; to retired Major General Fontes of U.S. Army Cyber Command.

All endorse her candidacy, as does Jeffrey Feltman, the former Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs of the United Nations, Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs, and U.S. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa; as has Anne Patterson, former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Egypt, and Colombia, and Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs.

I could go on.

Ambassador Richard has earned the support because of her long career. They all speak highly of her ability and qualifications to lead the Department's counterterrorism policy. As one of them said, she is "among the very finest diplomats our nation has produced."

I have every confidence she will lead the CT Bureau with distinction. This is a serious position, and it demands someone with the experience and caliber that Ms. Richard possesses. She has the skill, knowledge, and capacity to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

I urge my colleagues to support her nomination.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 30 minutes so that my colleagues and I can participate in a live unanimous consent prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1669

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today in support of free speech and in support of AM radio. AM radio is something that is widely enjoyed by Americans across this country. Over 80 million Americans listen to AM radio every month. They rely on it. Yet, earlier this year, we saw eight major automakers announce that they are stripping AM radio from new cars and new trucks, taking away the option of AM radio for consumers.

That decision, I believe, was a serious mistake—a mistake that would hurt Texans and that would hurt Americans in all 50 States. As a result, I join with my colleague, the Senator from Massachusetts, ED MARKEY, in introducing legislation—the AM Radio for Every Car Act.

I would note that Senator MARKEY is one of if not the most liberal Senator in this Chamber, and I am one of if not the most conservative Senator in this Chamber. I do not recall another bill on which Senator MARKEY and I have joined forces, and it speaks to the power of this issue that you see such deep agreement across ideological lines.

When Senator MARKEY and I introduced that legislation, within days, one of the eight major carmakers—Ford Motor Company—reversed course and announced they would now include AM radio on new cars and trucks. I think they viewed this coalition as a sign of the apocalypse. I would note that this bill has overwhelming bipartisan support. It has 44 cosponsors, 22 Democrats and 22 Republicans.

When we took it up in the Commerce Committee, it passed out of the Commerce Committee with overwhelming bipartisan support, and why is that? Because on the merits, this bill is the right thing to do for the American people.

No. 1, in times of disaster, AM radio is the single most reliable medium for communicating about a natural disaster. I remember when Hurricane Harvey hit my home city of Houston and the entire Texas gulf coast, the enormous challenges, people relied on AM radio.

When other forms of communication go down, AM radio is consistently the

most resilient to help people get out of harm's way, whether it is getting out of the way of a hurricane or getting out of the way of a tornado or getting out of the way of a forest fire or any other disaster, AM radio is there to help people know where to go and how to keep their families alive.

But, secondly, AM radio is particularly important for rural America. Texas has enormous quantities of our State that is rural. And in rural America, there are many parts of Texas, many parts of other States, where farmers and ranchers—the only thing they can get is AM radio. And when they are out on their farms and ranches, they rely on AM radio for weather reports, for crop reports, for news, for sports, for entertainment. Taking away the option for rural America of AM radio is bad—bad—for farmers and ranchers in America.

But, No. 3, diversity. AM radio promotes a diversity of views. Why? Because the barriers of entry to getting into AM radio are relatively low. To start an FM station is quite expensive. An AM station is much cheaper to start and to operate, and, as a consequence, we see a beautiful array of diversity of views reflected on AM radio nationally. There are 296 AM stations that are owned by Hispanics.

Nationally, there are 138 AM stations that are owned by African Americans. Nationally, there are 104 AM stations that are owned by Asian Americans. Nationally, there are 14 AM stations that are owned by American Indians or Alaskan Natives. Nationally, there are four AM radio stations owned by Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. And nationally, there are 385 AM radio stations that are owned by women.

If we wanted diversity of views, AM radio is critically important, and I would note, the support for this bill is broad and far-ranging. Seven former FEMA Directors have called for the Senate and the House to pass this bill as soon as possible, saying that "the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act is critical to ensuring Federal, State, and local officials can keep the public safe."

That sentiment was echoed by multiple emergency response organizations, such as the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Big City Emergency Managers, and the National Association of Counties.

All 50 State broadcaster associations have called on Congress to pass this bill. In addition to media groups, including the National Association of Black-Owned Broadcasters, the National Urban League, and OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates.

The bill has received the support of many agricultural and livestock groups. And the AARP has likewise shared their support for this bill, noting that "adults age 50 and above represent the largest share of AM radio listeners, but they also represent those most at risk from disaster events."

This is a bipartisan bill that makes sense, that preserves consumer choice.