

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Speaker Mike Johnson
Speaker of the United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

September 5, 2024

Dear Speaker Johnson:

As the proud representatives of a large proportion of the Venezuelan diaspora community in Florida, we write to express our grave concern regarding the current political crisis prompted by Nicolás Maduro's election denial. Additionally, we implore you to take immediate legislative action in support of Venezuelan democracy when Congress reconvenes in September.

Last October, the Biden-Harris Administration negotiated the Barbados Agreement, ratified by the Maduro regime and Venezuela's united democratic opposition. In addition to bringing home ten American citizens who were wrongfully detained by the regime, the agreement provided for a presidential election to be held in 2024. The election that took place last month would not have been possible without the Biden-Harris Administration's skillful diplomacy and strategic use of sanctions.

After the regime-controlled Venezuelan Supreme Court upheld a ban on opposition leader María Corina Machado's presidential campaign and the regime continued to harass, intimidate, and detain opposition activists, journalists, and human rights defenders, the Administration swiftly reimposed sanctions on the regime. By demonstrating U.S. resolve and commitment to Venezuelan democracy, President Biden and Vice President Harris ensured that at least one opposition candidate, Edmundo González Urrutia, was included on the ballot.

On July 28th, the Venezuelan people seized this opportunity to repudiate Maduro's despotism, and ballot receipts collected by the opposition demonstrate that an overwhelming majority chose to cast their vote for Edmundo González. However, Maduro has refused to face the reality of his electoral defeat. His hand-picked electoral council and courts aided his falsification of the election outcome. They failed to publish the results and censored news reports of González's victory.

Meanwhile, the Venezuelan people have bravely taken to the streets to demand justice and democracy, despite mass arrests and violence by the regime. Across the United States, from South Florida and New York to Louisiana, Venezuelans and allies of democracy have held demonstrations in solidarity with those facing severe repression at the hands of Maduro's cruel and brutal dictatorship. The Organization of American States and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have denounced Maduro's election fraud and condemned the Russian- and Cuban-backed crackdown on human rights and arbitrary arrests of protesters, including dozens of children.

In a letter to Machado and González, Vice President Kamala Harris underscored strong U.S. support for the Venezuelan people, denounced state-sponsored violence against demonstrators, and demanded more international pressure on Maduro to promote a peaceful transition of power.

The United States Congress must follow her lead and assist the Venezuelan people in restoring democracy. As the leader of the House of Representatives, you have the authority and imperative to support this mission and provide a better future for Venezuelans to stabilize the Western Hemisphere and prevent the need for Venezuelans to flee persecution in their country.

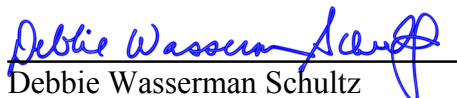
When Congress returns on September 9th, we encourage you to bring strong, bipartisan legislation to the floor to respond forcefully to Nicolás Maduro's attempts to steal the presidential election and repression by his regime. We must aid Venezuela's pro-democracy movement led by María Corina Machado and Edmundo González Urrutia and deter threats against their safety, including recent warrants for their arrest. Finally, we must provide firm backing for the Administration's ongoing efforts to pressure Maduro to honor the will of the Venezuelan people and allow the transfer of power.


We recommend the following list of bipartisan measures, sponsored by both Democrats and Republicans, for enactment to support these objectives.

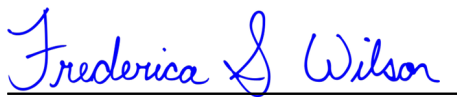
- **H.Res. 1409** – Standing in solidarity with the Venezuelan people and condemning Nicolás Maduro's attempt to steal the Venezuelan Presidential election.
- **H.R. 6831 (VERDAD Extension Act)** – To reauthorize the Venezuela Emergency Relief, Democracy Assistance, and Development Act of 2019.
- **H.R. 5670 (VOICE Act)** – To impose sanctions on corrupt individuals and entities responsible for banning opposition candidates and otherwise interfering in Venezuela's presidential election.
- **H.R. 4086 (AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act)** – To direct the United States Government to support extending the mandate of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela until a resolution of the Venezuelan crisis is achieved.
- **H.R. 825 (BOLIVAR Act)** – To prohibit U.S. agencies from entering into a contract with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime.
- **H.R. ___ (VALOR Act)** – To establish U.S. policy in support of a transition to democratic order in Venezuela.

The Venezuelan people need our support. In this crucial moment, Congress must set aside partisan politics and uphold its moral obligation to counter autocracy and support freedom and justice for all.

Sincerely,


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

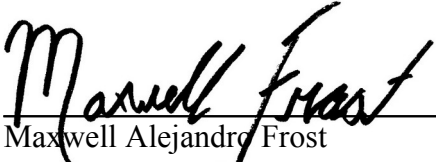

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress


Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

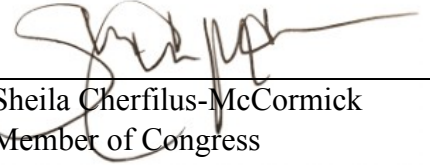

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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Jared Moskowitz
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