

111TH CONGRESS
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S. RES. 645

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the Parliamentary elections to be held in Venezuela on September 26, 2010.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2010

Mr. ENSIGN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the Parliamentary elections to be held in Venezuela on September 26, 2010.

Whereas both the United States and Venezuela were among the 21 original members that founded the Organization of American States on May 5, 1948;

Whereas both the United States and Venezuela joined the other 34 Organization of American States member nations and approved and accepted the Inter-American Democratic Charter on September 11, 2001;

Whereas Article 1 of the Organization of American States Inter-American Democratic Charter states the peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it;

Whereas Article 4 of the Organization of American States Inter-American Democratic Charter states transparency in government activities, probity, responsible public administration on the part of governments, respect for social rights, and freedom of expression and of the press are essential components of the exercise of democracy;

Whereas Article 57 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela guarantees the right of all citizens to freely express their thoughts and opinions;

Whereas Article 106 of the Charter for the Organization of American States establishes “an Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, whose principal function shall be to promote the observance and protection of human rights and to serve as a consultative organ of the Organization in these matters”;

Whereas the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights report entitled Democracy and Human Rights in Venezuela, published February 24, 2010, found that the government of President Hugo Chavez employs the punitive power of the state to intimidate or punish people inside Venezuela on account of their political opinions;

Whereas the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights report entitled Democracy and Human Rights in Venezuela found that conditions do not exist for human rights defenders and journalists to be able to freely carry out their work in Venezuela;

Whereas the Department of State declared on November 29, 2009, that the United States “commends the Honduran people for peacefully exercising their democratic right to select their leaders in an electoral process that began over a year ago”;

Whereas, prior to the election in Honduras, President Chavez announced on Venezuelan state television that he put the military of Venezuela on alert in response to the removal by the people of Honduras of Chavez's ally Manuel Zelaya;

Whereas the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights report entitled Democracy and Human Rights in Venezuela concluded that constraints on freedom of expression and the right to protest peaceably and the existence of a climate hostile to the free exercise of dissenting political participation contribute to the weakening of the rule of law and democracy in Venezuela;

Whereas, on June 14, 2010, the Department of State described an arrest order issued by the government of President Chavez for the owner of Venezuela's last remaining independent television station as "the latest example of the government of Venezuela's continuing assault on the freedom of the press" and urged Venezuela to "honor its commitment under the Inter-American Democratic Charter to uphold the principle that respect for human rights, including freedom of the press, is essential to representative democracies"; and

Whereas the people of Venezuela will hold parliamentary elections on September 26, 2010: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) the people and Government of the United

3 States support the right of the people of Venezuela

4 to free and fair elections as guaranteed by the Orga-

5 nization of American States Democratic Charter;

1 (2) the people and Government of the United
2 States support the right of the people of Venezuela
3 to the freedom of speech, the freedom of assembly,
4 and their right to freely express their political views
5 as guaranteed by the Organization of American
6 States Democratic Charter; and

7 (3) the people and Government of the United
8 States summarily reject any effort by President Cha-
9 vez to invoke the punitive power of the state to in-
10 timidate or punish the people of Venezuelan who ex-
11 ercise their right to express their political opinions,
12 their right to assemble, and their right to vote in a
13 free and fair elections.

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