

as the "Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Reid Post Office Building";

H.R. 2391, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5323 Highway N in Cottleville, Missouri as the "Lance Corporal Phillip Vinnedge Post Office";

H.R. 2939, to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres;

H.R. 3060, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 232 Southwest Johnson Avenue in Burleson, Texas, as the "Sergeant William Moody Post Office Building";

H.R. 4032, to exempt from Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 certain water transfers by the North Texas Municipal Water District and the Greater Texoma Utility Authority, and for other purposes;

H.R. 4488, to make technical corrections to two bills enabling the presentation of congressional gold medals, and for other purposes.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JOLLY) at 4 p.m.

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.

VENEZUELAN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY PROTECTION ACT

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4587) to impose targeted sanctions on individuals responsible for carrying out or ordering human rights abuses against the citizens of Venezuela, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4587

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 "Venezuelan Human Rights and Democracy Protection Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITION.

In this Act, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Financial Services, the Com-

mittee on the Judiciary, and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

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

(2) On February 12, 2014, a judge issued an arrest warrant for Leopoldo López, leader of the opposition party Voluntad Popular, for allegations in connection with the student protests.

(3) 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*.

(4) On February 18, 2014, opposition leader Leopoldo López turned himself in to Venezuelan authorities, was arrested, and charged with criminal incitement, conspiracy, arson, and intent to damage property.

(5) Leopoldo López is currently being held in a prison at a military facility.

(6) Nongovernmental human rights organizations have alleged that the charges brought against Leopoldo López appear to be a politically motivated attempt to silence dissent in the country.

(7) As of May 1, 2014, there have been 41 people killed, a reported 60 cases of torture, over 100 injured, and many oppressively detained in relation to pro-democracy demonstrations throughout Venezuela.

(8) On February 19, 2014, President Obama criticized the Government of Venezuela for arresting protesters, called for their release, and urged the government to focus on the "legitimate grievances of the Venezuelan people".

(9) According to the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 for Venezuela, "The principal human rights abuses reported during the year included corruption, politicization in the judicial system, and government actions to impede freedom of expression and restrict freedom of the press. The government did not respect judicial independence or permit judges to act according to the law without fear of retaliation. 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. The government harassed and intimidated privately owned television stations, other media outlets, and journalists throughout the year, using threats, fines, property seizures, targeted regulations, arrests, and criminal investigations and prosecutions."

(10) According to the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 for Venezuela, "The following human rights problems were reported by NGOs, the media, and in some cases the government itself: unlawful killings, including summary killings by police elements; torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions and lack of due process rights that contributed to widespread violence, riots, injuries, and deaths in prisons; inadequate juvenile detention centers; arbitrary arrests and detentions; corruption and impunity in police forces; political prisoners;

interference with privacy rights; corruption at all levels of government; threats against domestic NGOs; violence against women; anti-Semitism in the official media; trafficking in persons; violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity; and restrictions on workers' right of association."

(11) According to Freedom House's Freedom in the World report of 2013 on Venezuela, "Nicolás Maduro, further weakened the independent media, reduced the opposition's ability to serve as a check on government policy, and made threats to civil society groups."

SEC. 4. ACTIONS AT THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES.

The Secretary of State shall direct the United States Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States at the Organization of American States to defend and protect the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and strengthen efforts by international and multilateral organizations to advance the protection of human rights throughout the Western Hemisphere, especially 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)(1)(A) and the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (b)(1)(B) with respect to any person, including a current or former official of the Government of Venezuela or a person acting on behalf of that Government, that the President, or the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries), as the case may be, determines—

(1) has perpetrated, or is responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, significant acts of violence or serious human rights abuses in Venezuela against individuals participating in protests in Venezuela that began on February 12, 2014;

(2) has directed or ordered the arrest or prosecution of a person primarily because of the person's legitimate exercise of freedom of expression or assembly in relation to the protests in Venezuela that began on February 12, 2014;

(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) in relation to protests in Venezuela that began on February 12, 2014; or

(4) has engaged in censorship against individuals or media outlets disseminating information in relation to protests in Venezuela that began on February 12, 2014.

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—

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

(A) ASSET BLOCKING.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—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.

(ii) EXCEPTION.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The authority to impose sanctions under clause (i) shall not include