

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 843

Reaffirming the importance of preserving free and fair elections and strengthening democratic institutions in the Western Hemisphere as a policy priority for the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2018

Mrs. TORRES (for herself, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Reaffirming the importance of preserving free and fair elections and strengthening democratic institutions in the Western Hemisphere as a policy priority for the United States.

Whereas free, fair, transparent, and credible elections are the cornerstone of every democracy;

Whereas legitimate elections that respect fundamental freedoms are characterized by transparency, accountability, security, and accessibility for all voters;

Whereas strong democracies worldwide make for better trading partners, provide new market opportunities, improve global health outcomes, and promote economic freedom and regional security;

Whereas several countries across Latin America are scheduled to hold presidential elections in 2018, and approximately three-quarters of the region's citizens will choose their new leaders;

Whereas the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America are bound together by history, culture, and geography;

Whereas democratic stability, regional security, and economic prosperity in the Western Hemisphere are vital to the national security interests of the United States;

Whereas the transition to democracy has contributed to the long-term stability, security, and prosperity of nations throughout the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas the Inter-American Democratic Charter states that "representative democracy is indispensable for the stability, peace, and development of the region";

Whereas the current Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Luis Almagro, has advocated on behalf of free and fair elections in the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas in 2017, the OAS sent technical missions to observe elections in Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, Ecuador, and Bolivia;

Whereas the deterioration of democratic institutions and rule of law that commenced under the leadership of President Hugo Chavez has contributed to the dictatorship that exists today in Venezuela under the leadership of President Nicolas Maduro, which has caused a serious humanitarian, economic, and security crisis that threatens the stability of the Western Hemisphere;

Whereas the Russian Federation has repeatedly attempted to interfere in democratic elections, including in the United States, France, and Germany, including through carrying out disinformation campaigns and seeking to penetrate election infrastructure;

Whereas there are concerns that state and nonstate actors, such as narcotraffickers, may attempt to interfere in this year's elections in the Western Hemisphere, including through carrying out disinformation campaigns, fraud, and seeking to penetrate election infrastructure;

Whereas any such activities have the potential to contribute to the degradation of democratic institutions and the rise of instability in the Western Hemisphere; and

Whereas the former United States National Security Advisor has stated that there were “initial signs” that the Russian Federation intends to interfere in the upcoming general elections in Mexico: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) reaffirms the centrality to United States in-
3 terests of preserving free and fair elections and ad-
4 vancing democratic institutions in the Western
5 Hemisphere;

6 (2) reaffirms its support for the Inter-American
7 Democratic Charter and the work of domestic elec-
8 tion observation and international election observa-
9 tion missions, such as those led by the Organization
10 of American States and the European Union, to pro-

1 mote free and fair elections in the Western Hemi-
2 sphere;

3 (3) rejects actions by the Government of Ven-
4 ezuela that damage the credibility of elections in
5 Venezuela this year;

6 (4) urges political leaders and judicial authori-
7 ties in the Western Hemisphere to respect the will
8 of voters and uphold the constitutions of their re-
9 spective countries; and

10 (5) rejects efforts by the Russian Federation
11 and other hostile state or nonstate actors, including
12 narcotraffickers, to interfere with the outcomes of
13 elections in the Western Hemisphere and urges
14 countries in the Western Hemisphere to maintain
15 vigilance to safeguard their democratic institutions
16 during this year's elections.

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