

Department of Defense announced a proactive review initiative to identify veterans discharged due to their sexual orientation and assess whether an upgrade in discharge is warranted;

Whereas military leaders have likewise acknowledged that, in addition to lesbian, gay, and bisexual military service members, transgender service members also serve the United States just as bravely and well as other service members;

Whereas, under the pressures of the Cold War, and at the instigation and lead of Congress, the Federal Government also pursued anti-LGBT policies, which resulted in tens of thousands of LGBT civilian employees being terminated;

Whereas the Department of State began investigations into employees for alleged homosexual activity as early as the 1940s;

Whereas following the targeting of gay employees in the Department of State by Senator Joseph McCarthy in 1950, the Senate held hearings on “The Employment of Homosexuals and other Sex Perverts in the Government”, which—

(1) led to the issuance of a widely read report that falsely asserted that gay people posed a security risk because they could be easily blackmailed; and

(2) found that gay people were unsuitable employees because “one homosexual can pollute a Government office”;

Whereas, in response to allegations against gay people made by Senator McCarthy, the Department of State increased its persecution of lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees;

Whereas more than 1,000 Department of State employees were dismissed due to their sexual orientation, and many more individuals were prevented from joining the Department of State due to discriminatory hiring practices;

Whereas thousands of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals served honorably in the Department of State as Foreign Service officers, Foreign Service specialists, civil servants, and contractors, upholding the values, and advancing the interests, of the United States even as the country discriminated against them;

Whereas the effort to purge gay and lesbian employees from the Federal Government was codified in 1953 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10450 (18 Fed. Reg. 2489; relating to security requirements for Government employment), which—

(1) defined “perversion” as a security threat; and

(2) mandated that every civilian employee and contractor pass a security clearance;

Whereas, over many decades, the Federal Government, led by security officials in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Civil Service Commission (referred to in this preamble as the “CSC”), and nearly every other agency of the Federal Government, investigated, harassed, interrogated, and terminated thousands of lesbian, gay, and bisexual civilian employees for no other reason than the sexual orientation of those employees;

Whereas these discriminatory policies by the Federal Government, the largest employer in the United States, encouraged similar efforts at the State and local level, particularly in higher education and the private sector;

Whereas, in 1969, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled in *Norton v. Macy*, 417 F.2d 1161 (1969) that—

(1) “homosexual conduct” may never be the sole cause for dismissal of a protected civilian employee; and

(2) the potential embarrassment stemming from the private conduct of a civilian employee may not affect the efficiency of the Federal civil service;

Whereas, despite the decision in *Norton v. Macy*, the CSC continued its efforts to rid the Federal Government of gay, lesbian, and bisexual employees until 1973, when the United States District Court for the Northern District of California ruled in *Society for Individual Rights, Inc. v. Hampton*, 63 F.R.D. 399 (1973) that the exclusion or discharge from Federal civil service of any lesbian, gay, or bisexual person because of prejudice was prohibited;

Whereas many Federal Government agencies, including the National Security Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of State, none of which were subject to the rules of the CSC, continued to harass and seek to exclude lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals from their ranks until 1995, when President Bill Clinton issued Executive Order 12968 (50 U.S.C. 3161 note; relating to access to classified information), which barred the practice of denying a Federal Government security clearance solely on the basis of sexual orientation;

Whereas transgender military service members, Foreign Service members, and civilian employees continued to be harassed and excluded from Federal civil service until 2014, when President Barack Obama issued Executive Order 13672 (79 Fed. Reg. 42971; relating to further amendments to Executive Order 11478, Equal Employment Opportunity in the Federal Government, and Executive Order 11246, Equal Employment Opportunity), which prohibited the Federal Government and Federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity;

Whereas, on January 9, 2017, Secretary of State John Kerry issued a formal apology for the pattern of discrimination against LGBT Foreign Service members and civilian employees at the Department of State;

Whereas, despite persecution and systematic mistreatment by the Federal Government beginning in the early 1940s through the 1990s, including what historians have labeled as the “Lavender Scare”, LGBT individuals have never stopped honorably serving the United States;

Whereas LGBT individuals continued to make significant contributions to the United States through their work as clerks and lawyers, surgeons and nurses, Purple Heart recipients and Navy Seals, translators and air traffic controllers, engineers and astronomers, teachers and diplomats, rangers and Postal Service workers, and advisors and policy makers;

Whereas other countries throughout the world, including some of the closest allies of the United States, have apologized for similarly discriminating against LGBT military service members, Foreign Service members, and civilian employees; and

Whereas, in order for the United States to heal and move forward, the Federal Government must accord all LGBT individuals who were discriminated against by, wrongfully terminated by, and excluded from serving in the uniformed services, the Foreign Service, and the Federal civil service the same acknowledgment and apology: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

The Senate—

(1) acknowledges and condemns the discrimination against, wrongful termination of, and exclusion from the Federal civil service, the Foreign Service, and the uniformed services of the thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (referred to in this section as “LGBT”) individuals who were affected by the anti-LGBT policies of the Federal Government;

(2) on behalf of the United States, apologizes to—

(A) the affected LGBT military service members, Foreign Service members, veterans, and Federal civil service employees; and

(B) the families of those service members, veterans, and Federal civil service employees; and

(3) reaffirms the commitment of the Federal Government to treat all military service members, Foreign Service members, veterans, and Federal civil service employees and retirees, including LGBT individuals, with equal respect and fairness.

SEC. 2. DISCLAIMER.

Nothing in this resolution—

(1) authorizes or supports any claim against the United States; or

(2) serves as a settlement of any claim against the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 741—CONDEMNING THE ILLEGITIMATE REGIME OF NICOLÁS MADURO IN THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 741

Whereas, since 2005, the United States has imposed targeted sanctions on individuals and entities of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that have engaged in criminal, anti-democratic, unconstitutional, or corrupt acts and violated basic human rights;

Whereas, since 2006, the Secretary of State has determined that Venezuela is not “cooperating fully with United States anti-terrorism efforts” as outlined in section 40A of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2781);

Whereas, since coming to power in 2013, Nicolás Maduro and his illegitimate regime have committed numerous criminal, anti-democratic, unconstitutional, and corrupt acts and violated basic human rights, including—

(1) embezzling billions of dollars from the Venezuelan people, including through the illicit removal of gold from the Central Bank of Venezuela;

(2) declaring approximately 12 percent of the country to be a part of an “Orinoco Mining Arc” and using his position to oversee the exploitation of vital resources for personal gain; and

(3) establishing the Special Action Force of the National Police (FAES) in 2017, and utilizing them to execute illegal raids and extrajudicial killings;

Whereas, on January 5, 2019, the people of Venezuela responded to years of suffering and suppression under Nicolás Maduro by electing Juan Guaidó as President of the National Assembly of Venezuela, the only remaining democratically elected and legitimate institution in the country;

Whereas, upon being elected President of the National Assembly of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó invoked relevant articles of the Venezuelan constitution and became the Interim President of Venezuela;

Whereas, on January 10, 2019, Nicolás Maduro unlawfully reassumed the presidency of Venezuela, and his rule was deemed illegitimate by many Venezuelans and more than 50 countries, including most of the neighboring countries of Venezuela, the United States, and the majority of the European Union;

Whereas, since unlawfully reassuming the presidency in 2019, Nicolás Maduro has exacerbated ongoing economic and humanitarian crises, and forced more than 7,700,000 people to flee Venezuela;

Whereas Nicolás Maduro has provided diplomatic support to, and engaged with, countries that have been designated as state sponsors of terrorism under United States law, including by—

(1) allowing the Republic of Cuba to restructure the Venezuelan military, train armed forces in Venezuela, train Venezuelan intelligence agents in Cuba, and stating that Venezuela is “grateful to Cuba’s revolutionary armed forces” and “salute them and will always welcome them”;

(2) awarding a \$490,000,000 contract to the state-owned National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company to revamp the Paraguana Refining Center, the largest refining complex in Venezuela; and

(3) establishing a diplomatic mission and embassy in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (commonly known as “North Korea”) and allowing North Korea to similarly establish a mission and embassy in Venezuela;

Whereas, in response to the numerous criminal, anti-democratic, unconstitutional, and corrupt acts and basic human rights violations committed by Nicolás Maduro and persons serving in his illegitimate regime, the United States has imposed a number of sanctions on him and his enablers, including—

(1) on March 8, 2015, when President Barack Obama issued Executive Order 13692 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property and suspending entry of certain persons contributing to the situation in Venezuela) to sanction persons engaged in public corruption activities and involved in human rights violations, the persecution of political opponents, the curtailment of press freedoms, and the arbitrary arrest and detention of anti-government protestors;

(2) on August 24, 2017, when President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13808 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to imposing additional sanctions with respect to the situation in Venezuela), which prohibited the Government of Venezuela from accessing financial markets of the United States;

(3) on March 19, 2018, when President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13827 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to taking additional steps to address the situation in Venezuela) to prohibit any transaction involving the issuance of any Venezuelan digital currency;

(4) on May 21, 2018, when President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13835 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to prohibiting certain additional transactions with respect to Venezuela) to prohibit transactions related to purchasing Venezuelan debt;

(5) on August 5, 2019, when President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13884 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note; relating to blocking property of the Government of Venezuela), freezing the assets of the Maduro government in the United States and blocking the property, imposing visa restrictions, and permitting financial sanctions on non-United States persons that assist the Maduro government; and

(6) under section 7031(c)(1)(A) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Appropriations Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-6; 133 Stat. 317) and section 7031(c)(1)(A) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Appropriations Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-94; 133 Stat. 2864);

Whereas, on October 17, 2023, the illegitimate Maduro regime signed the Partial Agreement on the Promotion of Political Rights and Electoral Guarantees for All (commonly known as the “Barbados Agreement”), which states that all parties, including the opposition party, shall be allowed to freely select their candidates for the presidential election;

Whereas the Biden Administration—

(1) on October 18, 2023, in response to the signing of the Barbados Agreement, issued General License No. 44 and suspended certain sanctions on Venezuela’s oil and gas sector; and

(2) allowed General License No. 44 to expire on April 18, 2024, in response the illegitimate Maduro regime preventing the democratic opposition from registering the candidate of their choice, harassing and intimidating political opponents, and unjustly detaining numerous political actors and members of civil society;

Whereas María Corina Machado—

(1) was elected by the people of Venezuela on October 26, 2023, as the opposition candidate to run against the illegitimate Maduro regime in the July 28, 2024, presidential election in Venezuela;

(2) was subsequently disqualified on January 26, 2024, by the Supreme Justice Tribunal, the highest court of Venezuela, from running in the election and was not provided the opportunity to respond to the disqualifying allegations in court; and

(3) has since endorsed Edmundo González Urrutia to run for President of Venezuela since her unwarranted disqualification, stating on the campaign trail, “We are united and strong”;

Whereas, on December 20, 2023, the Maduro regime finally released 6 wrongfully detained United States citizens in Venezuela only after the Biden Administration agreed to release Alex Saab, who was charged in Federal court in October 2021, for laundering the proceeds of violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-213; 91 Stat. 1494) in connection with a scheme to pay bribes to take advantage of the exchange rate controlled by Venezuela;

Whereas the Department of State has described Saab as “one of the two most important money men in the Maduro government” and “the middle man” between Maduro’s narco-terrorist regime and the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Whereas, prior to his arrest, Saab established the illegal “Gold for Gas” scheme with Iran, allowing the country to avoid sanctions and be paid in Venezuelan gold in exchange for sham “humanitarian” deliveries of fuel to Venezuela;

Whereas, on January 15, 2024, Maduro proved to the world that he operates a criminal enterprise disguised as a country when he named Alex Saab as the head of Venezuela’s International Investment Center; and

Whereas the illegitimate Maduro regime has exhibited a clear pattern of corruption, ruling by force, and undermining stability and democracy in Venezuela: Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) rejects the attempt by the illegitimate Maduro regime to hold sham elections and consolidate power through weaponizing institutions, especially the electoral committee and judicial system;

(2) demands that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela hold free and fair elections on July 28, 2024, and allow all opposition candidates, including Edmundo González Urrutia, to register on the ballot and participate in the elections in compliance with the Partial Agreement on the Promotion of Political Rights and Electoral Guarantees for All (commonly known as the “Barbados Agreement”);

(3) denounces any attempt by the illegitimate Maduro regime to intimidate and repress the Venezuelan people and its democratic candidates through any kind of violence;

(4) condemns the illegitimate Maduro regime for the flagrant and repeated acts of corruption, desecrating the rule of law, and

engaging in anti-democratic and criminal acts; and

(5) encourages the Administration to condemn the results of the Venezuelan election on July 28, 2024, if fraud occurs, and to subsequently impose additional sanctions on Maduro and the coconspirators in his illegitimate regime to ensure they are unable to profit through their illegal and corrupt activities.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I have seven requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 3:45 p.m., to hold a working coffee titled “Visit of His Excellency Jens Stoltenberg.”

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 2:45 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to grant floor privileges to my interns for the following days—these are the days that they are having their shadow day where they accompany me around the