

ballot is received by the Postal Service, when it is in transit, and when it has arrived at their election authority.

Beyond a Postal Service barcode, under the bill, a ballot must meet other requirements, including utilizing the Postal Service's envelope design standards. Additionally, the ballot must include the official election mail logo or any future logo the Postal Service establishes for ballots.

While I encourage every citizen who wishes to vote in person on election day to do so, many States have adopted vote-by-mail policies. We must take the integrity of our elections serious and account for the fact that a significant number of Americans choose to cast their ballots by mail.

This bill is a commonsense, bipartisan response to a rising level of mail-in voting nationwide and will put in place requirements to ensure that the U.S. Postal Service can more efficiently handle and more transparently track the mailed ballots of every American citizen.

I thank my colleagues, Representatives PORTER, DONALDS, and MACE, for their work on this important legislation. I encourage all my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, regardless of party affiliation, every voting American wants to be confident that their ballot will get processed. No matter who we vote for, we all want our ballots to get smoothly to their final destination on time to be counted.

After all, this desire applies to anything important that we want processed. When was the last time anyone here sent a family heirloom through the mail to their relative without getting a tracking number? Who hasn't tracked an order of clothing or medicine at least once? I don't know about you, but for me, it is comforting to know what city my new shoes are in when they are being shipped so I know they are truly on the way.

Ballots are so much more important than shoes. When something is important to us, we all want to know it is in good hands, and our ballots are no exception.

Fortunately, the United States Postal Service created a tracking barcode for mail-in ballots, but unfortunately, right now, not everyone gets to use ballot envelopes that meet the Postal Service design requirements. That is why I joined Republican Representatives BYRON DONALDS and NANCY MACE in introducing the Vote by Mail Tracking Act, to fix that problem.

Under this nonpartisan bill, every ballot envelope will meet Postal Service standards and get a tracking barcode. Voters of all political stripes can have confidence that their ballot is accounted for along the journey to our election officials.

This commonsense modernization can improve transparency and trust in

our elections for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike. That is exactly why this bill is led by 10 Republicans and 10 Democrats who represent every major ideological caucus in the House. That includes both Chairman COMER and Ranking Member RASKIN, two people named Jamie who couldn't be more different but both co-sponsor this bill.

Madam Speaker, it just doesn't get more bipartisan than this bill. These days, it can be hard enough just to get Democrats to agree with Democrats and Republicans to agree with Republicans in this Congress, let alone to have conservatives, moderates, progressives, and Members somewhere in between all teaming up to back legislation. The Vote by Mail Tracking Act has support from every corner of the House because it is not partisan. It is just good policy.

If the shipment carrying Christmas presents that I order online is trackable, then we should certainly all expect something as valuable and as sacred as our ballots to be trackable, too.

This bill doesn't just make things more streamlined for the American people; it also makes processing easier and more efficient for the Postal Service, reducing its burden and making efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

I thank all of my colleagues who co-sponsored this legislation and unanimously voted to advance it out of the Oversight Committee. I give a special thank-you to Chairman COMER, Ranking Member RASKIN, and their staff for their work on this bill.

The Vote by Mail Tracking Act is truly a reflection that it is still possible, even in this political moment, to find consensus in Washington and come together on real solutions. I urge every single Member of this body to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. I urge the passage of H.R. 5658, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I encourage my House colleagues to support this bipartisan, commonsense bill that will help further build trust in American Federal elections in the future, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5658, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further pro-

ceedings on this motion will be postponed.

# BANNING OPERATIONS AND LEASES WITH THE ILLEGITIMATE VENEZUELAN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME ACT

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 825) to prohibit contracting with persons that have business operations with the Maduro regime, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 825

*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 "Banning Operations and Leases with the Illegitimate Venezuelan Authoritarian Regime Act" or the "BOLIVAR Act".

## SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON CONTRACTING WITH PERSONS THAT HAVE BUSINESS OPERATIONS WITH THE MADURO REGIME.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (d), the head of an executive agency may not enter into a contract for the procurement of goods or services with any person that the head of an executive agency determines, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, knowingly engages in significant business operations, as defined by the Secretary in consultation with the Director, with an authority of the Government of Venezuela that is not recognized as the legitimate Government of Venezuela by the United States.

### (b) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The prohibition under subsection (a) does not apply to a contract that the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, determines—

(A) is necessary—

(i) for purposes of providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela;

(ii) for purposes of providing disaster relief and other urgent humanitarian aid or lifesaving measures; or

(iii) to carry out noncombatant evacuations; or

(B) is in the national security interests of the United States.

(2) SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to contracts and agreements that support United States Government activities in Venezuela, including those necessary for the maintenance of United States Government facilities in Venezuela, or to contracts with international organizations.

(3) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of State shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of any contract entered into on the basis of an exception provided for under paragraph (1), which may be submitted in a classified form, as appropriate.

(c) OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL LICENSES.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to a person that has a valid license to operate in Venezuela issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

(d) AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN VENEZUELA.—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to contracts related to the operation and maintenance of the United

States Government's consular offices and diplomatic posts in Venezuela.

(e) **EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.**—The prohibition in subsection (a) does not apply to any activity subject to the reporting requirements under title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.), any authorized intelligence activity of the United States, or any activity or procurement that supports an authorized intelligence activity.

(f) **WAIVER.**—The Secretary of State may waive the requirements of subsection (a) if the Secretary of State determines that to do so is in the national interest of the United States.

(g) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) **BUSINESS OPERATIONS.**—The term “business operations” means engaging in commerce in any form, including acquiring, developing, maintaining, owning, selling, possessing, leasing, or operating equipment, facilities, personnel, products, services, personal property, real property, or any other apparatus of business or commerce.

(3) **EXECUTIVE AGENCY.**—The term “executive agency” has the meaning given the term in section 133 of title 41, United States Code.

(4) **GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA.**—(A) The term “Government of Venezuela” includes the government of any political subdivision of Venezuela, and any agency or instrumentality of the Government of Venezuela.

(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term “agency or instrumentality of the Government of Venezuela” means an agency or instrumentality of a foreign state as defined in section 1603(b) of title 28, United States Code, with each reference in such section to “a foreign state” deemed to be a reference to “Venezuela”.

(5) **PERSON.**—The term “person” means—

(A) a natural person, corporation, company, business association, partnership, society, trust, or any other nongovernmental entity, organization, or group;

(B) any governmental entity or instrumentality of a government; and

(C) any successor, subunit, parent entity, or subsidiary of, or any entity under common ownership or control with, any entity described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

(h) **TERM OF APPLICABILITY.**—This section shall apply with respect to any contract entered into during the three-year period beginning on the date that is 180 days after the enactment of this Act.

The **SPEAKER pro tempore**. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

The **SPEAKER pro tempore**. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the people of Venezuela have faced years of repression. Political persecution, human rights abuses, and press censorship are all commonplace under the brutal, illegitimate, and anti-American regime of Nicolas Maduro, a regime closely allied with Russia, Iran, Cuba, and the People's Republic of China.

The American Government should always stand in solidarity with the long-suffering people of Venezuela and against the Maduro dictatorship. Part of that solidarity should be to ensure that the Maduro regime is denied any resources that will allow it to continue the oppression of its own citizenry.

This past July, Maduro and his representatives falsely claimed victory in Venezuela's Presidential election. Maduro has since been accused of intimidating and repressing his opposition in order to cling to power.

A couple of months ago, on September 12, the United States sanctioned 16 of Nicolas Maduro's allies in response to accusations that they engaged in human rights abuses and election obstruction. While not all of Maduro's allies will be subject to sanctions, the money of hardworking U.S. taxpayers should not ultimately find its way to those who support the regime of a ruthless dictator.

H.R. 825 is straightforward. It requires Federal agencies to ensure that they are not contracting with any entity that conducts significant business operations with Maduro and his allies.

That said, it also includes appropriate exceptions, such as situations of national security, for the purposes of providing humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and other urgent lifesaving measures or to carry out noncombatant evacuations.

This is not a new concept to the U.S. Congress. The fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act contained a provision in section 890 that prohibited the Pentagon from entering into contracts with companies that also have contracts with any Venezuelan Government entity under Maduro's control. As with H.R. 825, there are waivers for contracts related to providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, among other exceptions.

The **BOLIVAR Act** would extend prohibitions under section 890 to the rest of the Federal Government.

I support the **BOLIVAR Act** and thank my colleagues on the committee, Representative MIKE WALTZ and Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, for leading this bill.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all of my colleagues support H.R. 825, a measured response and most timely piece of legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the **BOLIVAR Act** would temporarily prohibit executive agencies from entering into contracts for the procurement of goods or serv-

ices with any person or business that they determine, with the concurrence of the Department of State, knowingly engages in significant business operations with the Maduro regime in Venezuela.

The bill goes on to list certain exceptions, including contracts vital to U.S. national security or necessary for the purposes of providing humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and other urgent lifesaving measures, or to carry out noncombatant evacuations.

I certainly understand the motivation behind this bill. The Maduro regime's blatant disregard of the recent election results in Venezuela is a violation of international law and has left the regime more isolated than ever.

I know that the administration has some concerns about this bill. However, the Department of Defense, which conducts almost two-thirds of Federal procurement, has had a policy in place like the **BOLIVAR Act** for 2 years now. I thank the majority for working with us to address some of those concerns in the bill before us today.

Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I encourage my House colleagues to support this bill to ensure that Federal agencies not contract with any entity that conducts business with the Maduro dictatorship and his allies, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The **SPEAKER pro tempore**. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. FRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 825, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## MARK OUR PLACE ACT

Mr. FRY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3126) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish or replace a headstone, marker, or medallion for the grave of an eligible Medal of Honor recipient, regardless of the recipient's dates of service in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3126

*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 “Mark Our Place Act”.

### SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED HEADSTONE, MARKER, OR MEDALLION FOR MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2306(d)(5)(C) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking clause (i);