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Reps. Sires, Castro Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Promote Human Rights in Venezuela

(Washington, D.C.) – Today, **Representative Albio Sires** (NJ-08), Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civilian Security, Migration, and International Economic Policy and **Representative Joaquin Castro** (TX-20), Chairman of the Subcommittee on International Development, International Organizations and Global Corporate Social Impact introduced the **AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act**, which aims to hold Nicolás Maduro and his associates accountable for human rights violations while supporting the humanitarian needs of the Venezuelan people. Reps. Sires and Castro were joined by ## original cosponsors: Reps. **Mark Green** (TN-07), **Gerald Connolly** (VA-11), **Brian Fitzpatrick** (PA-01), **Debbie Wasserman Schultz** (FL-23), **Maria Elvira Salazar** (FL-27), **Juan Vargas** (CA-51), **Nanette Diaz Barragán** (CA-44), **Vicente Gonzalez** (TX-15), and **Dina Titus** (NV-01).

“The restoration and protection of fundamental rights lies at the heart of U.S. foreign policy,” **said Rep. Albio Sires**. “It is imperative that we use our voice and vote at the United Nations to bring perpetrators of human rights violations to justice and chart a path towards a peaceful, democratic transfer of power in Venezuela.”

“As Venezuelans continue to flee from repression and instability, the United States must do our part to help resolve the profound humanitarian crisis they face at home,” **said Rep. Joaquin Castro**. “The AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act will energize U.S. support for extending the critical work of the U.N. Fact-Finding Mission in Venezuela and help the international community hold Nicolás Maduro accountable for his abuses. I thank Rep. Sires for his leadership on this bill and I look forward to Congress’s continued work to support the human rights and humanitarian needs of the Venezuelan people and encourage inclusive political negotiations.”

In September 2019, the U.N. Human Rights Council created an Independent Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to investigate human rights violations in Venezuela. Despite facing obstruction from the Maduro regime and being denied access to work in the country, the investigation has uncovered sufficient evidence to determine that “[violations of international human rights law and international criminal law have been committed](#).” However, the mandate for the Fact-Finding Mission is set to expire later this month, and a coalition of [125 human rights advocacy organizations](#) are appealing for international support to renew the mandate. The AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act would address ongoing humanitarian needs in Venezuela and ensure that the Fact-Finding Mission is extended for an additional two years, allowing investigators time to complete their work.

The AFFECT Human Rights in Venezuela Act:

- Directs the President, Secretary of State, and U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. to push for a two-year extension of the mandate of the Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela.

- Instructs the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. to work with relevant international authorities to secure the release of political prisoners and wrongfully detained foreign nationals, including Americans.
- Stipulates U.S. support for providing humanitarian assistance directly to the Venezuelan people, including migrants and refugees.
- Requires the President and Secretary of State to incorporate the Fact-Finding Mission's conclusions in U.S. policy towards Venezuela and to report to Congress on actions taken to restore and support human rights in the country.

The complete bill text can be accessed [here](#).