

By Senator Avila

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Senate Memorial

A memorial to the United States Department of State,
urging the United States Secretary of State to
redesignate the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
(FARC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

WHEREAS, Colombia is among the oldest standing democracies
in Latin America, and

WHEREAS, the United States established diplomatic relations
with Colombia in 1822, and

WHEREAS, Colombia is a constitutional republic where the
people of Colombia hold the power and elect representatives to
exercise that power, and

WHEREAS, in October 1997, the United States Department of
State designated the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
(FARC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, and

WHEREAS, after many years of violence and armed conflict,
Colombia is now the United States' strongest ally in Latin
America, and

WHEREAS, with the support of the United States and the
State of Florida, Colombia has transformed itself from a
volatile and near-failed state in 2001 into a rich democracy
with a growing free market, and

WHEREAS, May 15, 2023, will mark the 11-year anniversary of
the effective date of the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion
Agreement, which has supported economic growth and employment
opportunities in Colombia, the United States, and the State of
Florida, and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida is responsible for roughly 25

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30 percent of all trade between the United States and Colombia, and

31 WHEREAS, the United States, the State of Florida, and
32 Colombia share a commitment to promoting security, prosperity,
33 human rights, and democracy in Colombia and across the Western
34 Hemisphere, and

35 WHEREAS, in recent years, the Colombian government has
36 taken courageous steps to enforce the law, stop drug
37 traffickers, and rein in foreign terrorist organizations like
38 the National Liberation Army (ELN) and FARC, and

39 WHEREAS, the State of Florida continues to support the
40 efforts of the Colombian government for peace, its support for
41 human rights defenders, its provision of greater educational
42 opportunities, its increases in public and private investments,
43 and its respect for human rights and the rule of law, and

44 WHEREAS, the United States maintains a strong commitment to
45 cooperating with the Colombian government to investigate,
46 arrest, and prosecute members of transnational criminal
47 organizations and to dismantle terrorist groups like the ELN,
48 FARC, and Hezbollah, whose illicit activities, specifically
49 narcotrafficking, for many years devastated Colombian and other
50 Latin American societies, and

51 WHEREAS, Colombia is an essential partner with the United
52 States in continuing efforts to support the courageous people of
53 Venezuela in their fight for freedom, democracy, and economic
54 prosperity against the dictatorship of Nicolás Maduro, and

55 WHEREAS, enemies of freedom, such as the communist regime
56 in Cuba and the Maduro regime in Venezuela, exploit and abuse
57 vulnerable individuals and promote violent unrest, vandalism,
58 and destruction of property against individuals simply asking to

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59 be heard, and

60 WHEREAS, in December 2021, the Biden Administration revoked
61 the designation of FARC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, and

62 WHEREAS, FARC has murdered, tortured, and kidnapped
63 innocent Colombians and committed gross violations of human
64 rights, and

65 WHEREAS, FARC opposes democratic institutions and those who
66 have fought for them, and

67 WHEREAS, FARC has committed and supported terrorism and
68 continues to do so, and

69 WHEREAS, the Colombian electorate in 2016 voted against a
70 referendum that would have enacted a deal with FARC, and

71 WHEREAS, the Colombian government later ratified an
72 agreement with FARC without the approval of the electorate, NOW,
73 THEREFORE,

74

75 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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77 That the Florida Legislature declares its firm commitment
78 to Colombia, the United States' strongest ally in Latin America,
79 and opposes the Biden Administration's revocation of FARC's
80 designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

81 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Florida Legislature urges
82 the United States Secretary of State to redesignate FARC as a
83 Foreign Terrorist Organization.

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
85 dispatched to the President of the United States, the President
86 of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States
87 House of Representatives, the United States Secretary of State,

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88 and each member of the Florida delegation to the United States
89 Congress.