

By Senator Avila

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Senate Memorial

A memorial to urge the United States Secretary of State to implement policies at the United States Department of State that reinstate economic sanctions on Nicolás Maduro and his Venezuelan dictatorship and impose sanctions on companies that do business with Venezuela.

WHEREAS, beginning in 2008, the United States imposed sanctions on the Venezuelan regime as Hugo Chávez began expropriating oil assets of companies including Exxon Mobil and, in 2017, the Trump administration placed economic sanctions on the Venezuelan dictatorship, targeting the state-owned oil and natural gas company Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), and

WHEREAS, on January 28, 2019, the United States Department of the Treasury, pursuant to Emergency Order 13850, designated PDVSA as operating in the oil sector of the Venezuelan economy, and the Secretary of the Treasury determined that the company was subject to United States sanctions that included the freezing of all property and interests subject to the United States' jurisdiction, whose value was estimated at \$7 billion, and prohibited individuals and companies in the United States from doing business with PDVSA, including exporting naphtha, and

WHEREAS, in February 2019, Nicolás Maduro ordered PDVSA to move its European office to Moscow to protect the company's overseas assets from United States sanctions, and

WHEREAS, on February 18, 2020, the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Department of the Treasury designated Rosneft Oil Company's Swiss-incorporated company,

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30 Rosneft Trading S.A., as operating in the oil sector of  
31 Venezuela for brokering the sale and transport of Venezuelan  
32 crude oil and supporting Nicolás Maduro's regime, and

33 WHEREAS, continuing through 2021, the United States has  
34 sanctioned Venezuela's Central Bank, National Development Bank,  
35 and Minerven, the state-owned gold company, as well as  
36 individuals that assisted PDVSA in evading sanctions, and

37 WHEREAS, the Biden administration has eased sanctions on  
38 companies that trade in oil produced in Venezuela or invest in  
39 the country's oil industry in response to Venezuela's agreement  
40 to allow free elections in 2024, and

41 WHEREAS, this misguided change in policy lessened the  
42 impact of longstanding sanctions aimed at promoting freedom and  
43 democracy in Venezuela and could increase the flow of Venezuelan  
44 oil into the global crude market, but is not expected to help  
45 lower the prices that have remained stubbornly high amid turmoil  
46 in Europe and the Middle East, and

47 WHEREAS, on October 18, 2023, the sanctions on the export  
48 of crude oil and refined petroleum were lifted for a period of 6  
49 months, and Minerven is authorized to conduct transactions that,  
50 unfortunately, will provide revenue to the Maduro regime which  
51 it can use to stay in power and spread terror and corruption  
52 around the globe, and

53 WHEREAS, decades of corruption and mismanagement at PDVSA  
54 have resulted in a rusted drilling infrastructure that is  
55 pumping less than a third of the 3 million barrels a day that  
56 Venezuela produced during its peak production in the early  
57 2000s, and

58 WHEREAS, on October 30, 2023, the Maduro-aligned Venezuelan

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59 Supreme Court suspended the opposition's entire primary  
60 elections process, including the election results, and ordered  
61 organizers to hand over documents identifying millions of voters  
62 after the opposition's primary election garnered more support  
63 than expected, leading many in the United States Congress to  
64 support the reinstatement of sanctions on the Venezuelan  
65 dictatorship, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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69 That the United States Secretary of State is urged to  
70 implement policies at the United States Department of State that  
71 reinstate economic sanctions on Nicolás Maduro and his  
72 Venezuelan dictatorship and impose sanctions on companies that  
73 do business with Venezuela.

74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State dispatch  
75 copies of this memorial to the President of the United States,  
76 the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
77 United States House of Representatives, the United States  
78 Secretary of State, and each member of the Florida delegation to  
79 the United States Congress.