

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 17, 2014

Dear Friends,

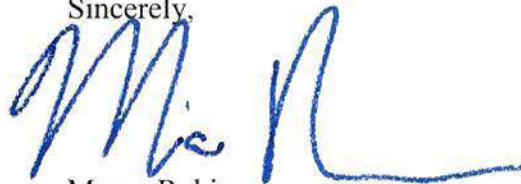
Thank you for inviting me to participate in the “Pressure, Sanctions & Strategy: How To Influence Change in Venezuela” workshop at Florida International University. Although I cannot be with you in person today, please accept my best wishes for a successful event.

As you know, Venezuela is a country with large energy resources and an educated business class. However, the authoritarian policies of former President Hugo Chavez have crippled the country and led to corruption, income inequality, poverty and instability. Since Nicolás Maduro has been in power, we have seen the continuation of Chavez’s repressive policies. In recent months, the Maduro government has been attacking peaceful demonstrations in Venezuela. Maduro’s government and regime-backed thugs are responsible for at hundreds of injuries and unjust incarcerations as well the deaths of more than 40 people.

This is why I introduced with Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) Senate Resolution 365 (S. Res.365) which passed the Senate unanimously on March 12, 2014. S. Res. 365 condemns Maduro’s wave of repression in Venezuela and calls for sanctions on regime officials. Additionally, Senator Menendez and I introduced “The Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014” (S.2142). This legislation authorizes \$15 million to defend human rights, support civil society organizations, and strengthen good governance and rule of law. It also requires President Obama to impose sanctions on persons that have been involved in serious human rights violations.

Our country, our government and our citizens need to be firmly on the side of the Venezuelan people as they stand up to claim their universal rights as human beings. As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I want to thank everyone present here today for their commitment to Venezuela, please know my thoughts are with as you discuss these important issues today.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator