

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 10, 2014

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
Vice President of United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington DC, 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President,

Recent events in Venezuela should alarm all people throughout the Western Hemisphere who truly believe in freedom and the dignity of all human beings.

No one should tolerate the kind of violent and deadly wave of repression we've seen in Venezuela over the past month. To date, Nicolas Maduro's government and regime-backed thugs are responsible for at least 20 deaths, 260 unjust incarcerations and more than 260 injured people.

Your visit this week to Chile and the Dominican Republic comes at a critical time for not only the Venezuelan people but also the future of human rights and democracy as key pillars of life in 21st century Latin America.

As you attend Chile's presidential inauguration and encounter several heads of state from the region, I strongly encourage you to seize this opportunity to build on your recent comments in *El Mercurio* by speaking clearly about the Venezuelan crisis and reminding our hemispheric neighbors and partners about their obligations under the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Furthermore, I encourage you to challenge their shameful indifference to Nicolas Maduro's trampling of human rights and democracy, as evidenced by Friday night's Organization of the American States (OAS) vote essentially siding with the regime.

And should you encounter Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, I hope you will look him in the eye and tell him that murdering and beating innocent Venezuelans will not fix his failing economy and crumbling society.

Ultimately, the U.S. has a responsibility to condemn Maduro's wave of repression and encourage a coalition of like-minded allies to stand with us and the Venezuelan people. As you travel to the region, please be aware that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will be considering a resolution calling on the Administration to place sanctions on regime officials responsible for the recent carnage.

This is a key moment in Venezuela's history and the region as a whole. The U.S. simply cannot stand and watch as authoritarians destroy decades of hard fought democratic gains and move the Western Hemisphere backwards towards a repeat of the instability and repression that plagued much of the 20th century.

Most Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MR', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator