

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 854

To provide humanitarian assistance to the Venezuelan people, including Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the Americas and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 29, 2019

Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL (for herself, Ms. SHALALA, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. SOTO, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. ESPAILLAT, and Ms. FRANKEL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To provide humanitarian assistance to the Venezuelan people, including Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the Americas and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Humanitarian Assist-
5 ance to the Venezuelan People Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Venezuela is in the grips of unprecedented
9 political and economic turmoil marked by hyper-

1 inflation, soaring crime rates, and an authoritarian
2 President.

3 (2) President Nicolás Maduro and his prede-
4 cessor have, through authoritarianism, graft, and in-
5 competence, precipitated a massive humanitarian
6 crisis both inside Venezuela and throughout the
7 Western Hemisphere.

8 (3) The Venezuelan gross domestic product is
9 expected to contract for the sixth year in a row in
10 2019, with the Government defaulting on its exter-
11 nal debt and inflation projected to exceed 1 million
12 percent this year.

13 (4) Health outcomes in Venezuela have ap-
14 proached critical levels as food, medicine, and serv-
15 ices become increasingly inaccessible, with 11.4 per-
16 cent of children in Venezuela under 5 years old suf-
17 fering from moderate or acute malnutrition.

18 (5) Nearly 10 percent of Venezuela's population
19 of 31 million have fled overseas, with nearly 90 per-
20 cent of those remaining living in poverty.

21 (6) Venezuelans have lost an average of 19
22 pounds of weight due to nationwide food shortages
23 since the beginning of the country's economic crisis.

1 (7) Venezuela is suffering from an 88 percent
2 medicine shortage, with more than 22,000 doctors
3 leaving Venezuela in the past 4 years.

4 (8) The Maduro Government has repeatedly re-
5 jected offers of humanitarian assistance, despite the
6 return of once-vanquished diseases like diphtheria
7 and measles, rampant cases of malaria, and the
8 sharp rise in infant and maternal mortality.

9 (9) Venezuela's rates of homicide and other
10 crimes have risen dramatically over the course of the
11 crisis, with chronic underreporting contributing to
12 an insufficient understanding of the scope of the cri-
13 sis.

14 **SEC. 3. REQUIREMENT FOR STRATEGY TO PROVIDE HU-**
15 **MANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE**
16 **OF VENEZUELA.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
18 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State,
19 in coordination with the Administrator of the United
20 States Agency for International Development, shall submit
21 to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee
22 on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the
23 Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on
24 Appropriations of the Senate a long-term strategy to pro-
25 vide humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela

1 both in Venezuela and throughout the Western Hemi-
2 sphere through credible and independent nongovernmental
3 organizations operating in Venezuela or in neighboring
4 countries to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan peo-
5 ple.

6 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The strategy re-
7 quired under subsection (a) shall include the following:

8 (1) A description of how and to what extent the
9 following assistance will be provided:

10 (A) Public health commodities for Ven-
11 ezuelan health facilities and services, including
12 medicines on the World Health Organization's
13 List of Essential Medicines and basic medical
14 supplies and equipment.

15 (B) Basic food commodities and nutritional
16 supplements needed to address growing mal-
17 nutrition and improve food security for the peo-
18 ple of Venezuela, with a specific emphasis on
19 the most vulnerable populations.

20 (C) Technical assistance to ensure health
21 and food commodities are appropriately se-
22 lected, procured, and distributed, predominantly
23 through local nongovernmental organizations.

24 (2) An identification of United States Agency
25 for International Development best practices in de-

1 livering humanitarian assistance, particularly with
2 regard to food assistance and how such best prac-
3 tices are being utilized in providing humanitarian as-
4 sistance to Venezuela.

5 (3) A description of obstacles put in place by
6 the Maduro Government to prohibit the entry of hu-
7 manitarian assistance into the country.

8 (4) A description of efforts to enhance support
9 for countries in the Western Hemisphere in sup-
10 porting the humanitarian needs of Venezuelan mi-
11 grants.

12 (5) A description of efforts to ensure that hu-
13 manitarian assistance for Venezuelans is coordinated
14 with other United States bilateral assistance in the
15 Western Hemisphere and does not result in elimi-
16 nating other bilateral assistance.

17 (6) A description of how humanitarian assist-
18 ance is being monitored and evaluated and what ad-
19 ditional staff are managing the assistance.

20 **SEC. 4. COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT ON UNITED**
21 **STATES EFFORTS TO PROVIDE HUMANI-**
22 **TARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF**
23 **VENEZUELA.**

24 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
25 ment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United

1 States shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs
2 and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of
3 Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations
4 and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate a re-
5 port assessing the impact of United States humanitarian
6 assistance to the people of Venezuela both in Venezuela
7 and throughout the Western Hemisphere.

8 **SEC. 5. SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS**
9 **ON THE HUMANITARIAN AND POLITICAL CRI-**
10 **SIS IN VENEZUELA.**

11 (a) INITIAL EFFORTS.—The President shall instruct
12 the Permanent Representative of the United States to the
13 United Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the
14 United States to secure the necessary votes to—

15 (1) place the humanitarian and political crisis
16 in Venezuela on the agenda at the United Nations;
17 and

18 (2) secure a Presidential Statement from the
19 United Nations urging the Government of Venezuela
20 to allow the delivery of humanitarian relief.

21 (b) ADDITIONAL EFFORTS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 30
23 days after the conclusion of efforts by the United
24 States Permanent Representative to the United Na-
25 tions under subsection (a), the President shall in-

1 struct the Permanent Representative to use the
2 voice, vote, and influence of the United States to se-
3 cure the adoption of a United Nations resolution de-
4 scribed in paragraph (2).

5 (2) RESOLUTION DESCRIBED.—The United Na-
6 tions resolution referred to in paragraph (1) is a res-
7 olution encouraging—

8 (A) the Government of Venezuela to
9 promptly allow safe and unhindered access for
10 humanitarian agencies and their implementing
11 partners, including possible support from neigh-
12 boring countries; and

13 (B) the Government of Venezuela to allow
14 the delivery of food and medicine.

15 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR HUMAN-**
16 **ITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE PEOPLE OF**
17 **VENEZUELA.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President is authorized to
19 provide humanitarian assistance to support the people of
20 Venezuela both in Venezuela and throughout the Western
21 Hemisphere.

22 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
23 authorized to be appropriated to the President

- 1 \$150,000,000 each year for fiscal years 2020 and 2021
- 2 to carry out this section.

