

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 26, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to request that you provide Venezuelan nationals in the U.S. with "Deferred Enforced Departure" (DED) which, according to law, may be granted to delay the deportation of groups of individuals to countries where they would be placed in danger due to political reasons. In the alternative, we would request that your Administration put into effect a program for Venezuelan nationals in the United States similar to the "Nicaraguan Review Program" (NRP) created by the Reagan Administration in 1987 for Nicaraguan nationals.

By instruction of President Reagan, on July 8, 1987, Attorney General Edwin Meese, under the legal authority of the Attorney General to establish procedures for asylum (currently 8 USC §1158(b)(1)), directed the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to take various steps involving Nicaraguans then present in the U.S. The order directed the INS not to deport, and to grant and expedite work authorization permits to, Nicaraguans in the U.S. who had requested asylum. That order creating the NRP had the effect of giving Nicaraguans who sought asylum special consideration by allowing them to remain in the United States with valid employment authorization. The NRP had the effect of granting Nicaraguans in the U.S. a provisional "color of law."

The Nicaraguan government at that time persecuted its citizens for their political opinions. We strongly believe that the Chavez government in Venezuela at this time is persecuting its citizens for their political views. Chavez is systematically eliminating the Venezuelan people's freedoms. By changing the constitution to secure his personal rule, dissolving the bicameral legislature to establish a unicameral one under his control, and controlling the "National Electoral Council," he has assumed control over every aspect of Venezuela's institutions. Chavez has also sought to silence peaceful opposition by placing heavy restrictions and penalties on media outlets that still permit criticism of the government.

According to data provided to us by the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service (USCIS), asylum approval rates in cases filed by citizens from Venezuela average around 50%. The United States has long followed the principle that we will not return a foreign national to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened. As Chavez deepens his dictatorship in Venezuela, we must not turn our backs on Venezuelans in the U.S. who fear persecution from Chavez for speaking out against his regime.

Accordingly, Mr. President, we request that you grant Venezuelan nationals in the U.S. DED, or in the alternative, that your Administration create a program similar to the NRP for Venezuelans in the U.S.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,



Lincoln Diaz-Balart



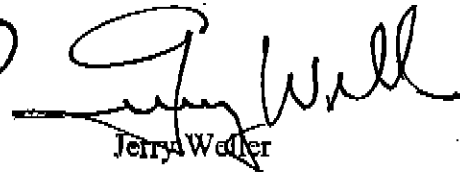
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen



Connie Mack



Mario Diaz-Balart



Jerry Weller

Cc: The Honorable Alberto Gonzales  
The Honorable Michael Chertoff  
The Honorable Emilio Gonzalez