

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Condemning the pardon of ex-Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Condemning the pardon of ex-Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández.

Whereas, according to court documents, from at least 2004 up to and including 2022, Juan Orlando Hernández, the former president of the Honduran National Congress and former two-term President of Honduras, was at the center of one of the largest and most violent drug-trafficking conspiracies in the world;

Whereas, during his political career, President Hernández abused his positions and authority in Honduras to facilitate the importation of over 400 tons of cocaine into the United States, enough for approximately 4,500,000,000 individual doses;

Whereas President Hernández's co-conspirators were armed with machine guns and other weapons, including AK-47s, AR-15s, and grenade launchers, which they used to protect their cocaine shipments as they transited across Honduras on route to the United States, protect the money they made from the sale of the cocaine, and guard their drug-trafficking territory from rivals;

Whereas President Hernández and his co-conspirators abused Honduran institutions, including the Honduran National Police and the Honduran military, to protect and grow their conspiracy, using heavily armed Honduran National Police officers to protect their cocaine shipments as they transited across Honduras;

Whereas President Hernández received millions of dollars of drug money from some of the largest and most violent drug-trafficking organizations in Honduras, Mexico, and elsewhere, and used those bribes to fuel his rise in Honduran politics, including a \$1,000,000 bribe from El Chapo, one of the world's most notorious drug kingpins;

Whereas, as President Hernández rose to power in Honduras, he provided increased support and protection for his co-conspirators, allowing them to move tons of cocaine, commit acts of violence and murder, and turn Honduras into one of the most dangerous countries in the world;

Whereas, during his time in office, President Hernández protected and enriched the drug traffickers in his inner circle and those who provided him with cocaine-fueled bribes that allowed him to obtain and stay in power;

Whereas President Hernández selectively supported and took credit for extraditions to the United States of certain drug traffickers who threatened his grip on power, while

at the same time promising drug traffickers who bribed him and followed his instructions that they would remain safe in Honduras;

Whereas the threat of being extradited to the United States made drug traffickers eager to bribe anyone who could protect them, and according to Federal prosecutors, they came to know they could rely on President Hernández;

Whereas President Hernández directed the Honduran National Police and military to protect smugglers who paid him off and he promised to shield them from extradition to the United States, reportedly telling one cocaine trafficker that “by the time the gringos find out, we will have eliminated extradition”;

Whereas President Hernández reportedly boasted, “We are going to stuff the drugs up the gringos’ noses, and they’re never even going to know it.”;

Whereas several of President Hernández’s co-conspirators were convicted and sentenced to prison in the United States, including President Hernández’s brother, Juan Antonio Hernández Alvarado, also known as “Tony Hernández”, who was convicted and sentenced to life in prison, Geovanny Fuentes Ramirez, a violent cocaine trafficker who met with President Hernández multiple times to discuss their drug trafficking partnership and who was convicted and sentenced to life in prison, and Juan Carlos Bonilla Valladares, also known as “El Tigre”, the former chief of the Honduran National Police, who pleaded guilty to his participation in the cocaine importation conspiracy and was sentenced to 19 years in prison;

Whereas President Hernández was convicted of drug trafficking and weapons conspiracy after a jury trial that lasted nearly three weeks, and sentenced to 45 years imprisonment and fined \$8,000,000;

Whereas President Hernández claimed that he was the victim of “political persecution”, but no credible evidence to support that claim has been presented;

Whereas President Hernández’s conviction and sentence were upheld on appeal; and

Whereas President Donald J. Trump’s pardon of Juan Orlando Hernández is an affront to the Federal law enforcement and judicial officials who investigated and prosecuted him and to the jurors who performed their civil duty in convicting him, weakens the rule of law, and severely harms the credibility of the United States in combating drug trafficking in this hemisphere and beyond: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) commends the Federal investigators, prosecutors, and other United States law enforcement
3 and judicial personnel for their extraordinary efforts
4 in investigating, apprehending, and prosecuting
5 President Juan Orlando Hernández;
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7 (2) commends the members of the New York
8 jury for faithfully and courageously weighing the evidence and finding President Hernández guilty beyond a reasonable doubt; and
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- 1 (3) condemns the pardon of convicted cocaine
- 2 kingpin Juan Orlando Hernández.