

AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5300

OFFERED BY MR. CASTRO OF TEXAS

After section 320, insert the following:

SEC. 320A. REPORTING ON DEMOCRACY FUND REDUCTIONS IN CUBA, VENEZUELA AND NICARAGUA.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the promotion of democracy, human rights, and civil society abroad is a core element of United States foreign policy, including in the Western Hemisphere;

(2) any reduction in funding for democracy programs in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua may undermine U.S. efforts to support civil society, independent media, and democratic institutions in those countries; and

(3) the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) administered funds related to democracy and governance programs in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing the following:

(1) A detailed accounting of all Democracy Fund allocations to Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua for the past three fiscal years, including any reductions associated with changes to USAID programs or structure.

(2) Identification of specific programs or initiatives in each country that have been curtailed, reduced, or eliminated as a result of funding cuts or USAID restructuring.

(3) Assessment of the potential impact of these reductions on democratic institutions, civil society organizations, independent media, and human rights advocacy in each country.

(4) Recommendations on steps the Department could take to mitigate the effects of such funding reductions on democracy promotion in these countries.

(c) FORM.—The report required by subsection (b) shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex if necessary.

(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “Democracy Fund” means funds appropriated to the Department for programs supporting democracy, governance, civil society, and human rights abroad.