

**Rep. Wasserman Schultz Testimony for Judiciary Committee Member
Day
Thursday Nov. 20, 2025**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for the opportunity to present two critical bills that protect the vulnerable, uphold the rule of law, and ensure real accountability for dangerous criminals.

First, I'd like to discuss H.R. 5506, the bipartisan Courtney Wild Reinforcing Crime Victims' Rights Act, which I proudly co-lead with Rep. Burchett. It's named for Courtney Wild, who bravely survived Epstein's cruelty and now fights to reform a system that badly mistreated her and her fellow survivors. As we all know by now, in 2008, Epstein received a sweetheart plea deal from then-U.S. Attorney Alex Acosta.

It not only gave Epstein and his co-conspirator immunity from federal prosecution, but worse, his victims weren't informed or consulted before this outrageous deal was reached. It was a clear violation of the intent of the Crime Victims' Rights Act, or CVRA, passed in 2004, which specifically gives victims the right to timely notice of any major development in the defendant's case.

Courtney thought she had the right, too. But courts ruled that because Epstein's charges were not formally filed, she and other victims weren't guaranteed these vital CVRA rights. It's a glaring loophole that must be fixed. And while I'm grateful the Epstein Files Transparency Act passed overwhelmingly this week, this bill guarantees transparency beyond just one man.

This bill would ensure future survivors of such horrific crimes aren't kept in the dark, and guarantees the transparency and accountability that the CVRA intended. Victims deserve to be protected at every legal step, and our job is to ensure legal loopholes don't allow criminals to escape accountability. I urge the Committee to take up and pass this bipartisan bill to show we support real justice and transparency for Epstein's survivors.

Next, I'd like to discuss H.R. 3310, the bipartisan Venezuela TPS Act, which I proudly co-lead with my Florida colleagues Mr. Soto and Ms. Salazar. I'm grateful to the Ranking Member for his unwavering partnership on this issue as well. This bill would redesignate Temporary Protected Status for Venezuelans residing in the U.S.

Over the last decade, Venezuela has spiraled deeper into humanitarian, economic, and political crisis under the criminal dictatorship of Nicolás Maduro. Maduro's murderous brutality, brazen election theft, and kleptocratic corruption have precipitated the largest peacetime refugee crisis

in modern history. Over eight million people have fled poverty, repression, and failed communist policies. And some have made a home in America, *legally*, under TPS. But the current President has taken that status away.

Over 400,000 Venezuelan Americans – most of whom arrived before 2021 during President Trump’s first term – have had their legal residency and work permits revoked.

The economic impacts of this action will be devastating for South Florida, and it will drive up costs everywhere.

I proudly represent the largest Venezuelan American community in Congress, and I’d like to tell you about them. Venezuelans are teachers, nurses, construction workers, and firefighters. They care for elderly parents and kids. Many run small businesses, and create jobs. And they all boost our labor force, tax base, and consumer market. Deporting Venezuelans means fewer jobs, less innovation, and less funding for Social Security and Medicare.

But it also means higher health, housing, and grocery costs, not to mention a massive waste of taxpayer dollars on detentions and deportations. Then there’s the moral price we pay for subjecting people to a totalitarian regime that this Administration accurately calls corrupt, authoritarian, and hostile to human rights.

Venezuelans love America. They’re patriots who cherish the freedoms many of us take for granted, and want that democracy for their home country too. And many Venezuelan TPS holders have U.S. citizen children. Trump’s policy will orphan them or condemn them to hopeless misery alongside their parents.

And TPS is bipartisan. Created by Congress, presidents of both parties utilized it to protect people from countries in crisis, provided that they follow the law. TPS recipients don’t get handouts. They pay application fees that fund this system without burdening taxpayers.

This bill also doesn’t shield anyone who commits a crime. TPS holders pass repeated background checks and *any* criminal record is disqualifying. Ending TPS doesn’t stop crime. It means law enforcement expends more resources arresting non-criminals, and that means letting real public threats walk free.

Trump’s termination of TPS doesn’t just separate families, it sends people back to a criminal regime where they will face violence, persecution and even death. It’s even more heinous to actively collaborate with Maduro, an indicted cartel kingpin, to facilitate these removals and reward him with sanctions relief.

And it's totally inconceivable and contradictory to continue twice-weekly deportation flights to Venezuela while threatening military action that may put innocents in the crossfire. How could the Administration declare conditions in Venezuela have improved enough to revoke TPS while bringing our largest aircraft carrier off their coast and considering military action?

We cannot credibly denounce authoritarian dictators while cutting side deals to swap immigrants for oil money. Venezuelan TPS recipients are law-abiding families, and we should focus law enforcement resources on real criminals, not collective punishment. Let's pressure Venezuela's regime, not its refugees. And let's reduce Americans' high costs, not our highest ideals.

I urge the Committee to take up and pass the bipartisan Venezuela TPS Act not out of charity, but for America's interests. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for your time on these two bills. Now, let's work together to protect the truly vulnerable among us. I yield back.