



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

1620 EYE STREET, NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
TELEPHONE (202) 293-7330
FAX (202) 293-2352
URL: www.usmayors.org

August 12, 2008

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The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

This past June, the United States Conference of Mayors unanimously adopted a resolution unequivocally condemning the summary and arbitrary disqualification of candidates without due juridical process in Venezuela, and denouncing the subjugation of the Venezuelan constitution and the total disregard of separated executive and judicial branches of government. Attached for your review and consideration is a copy of the resolution.

The mayors of the United States view with grave concern and indignation the disqualification of 272 otherwise eligible candidates from participating in the upcoming state and local elections in November. The disqualification of these candidates, rubber-stamped by the Venezuelan Supreme Court in spite of the absence of any formal charges against them, has confirmed the court's lack of judicial independence, is a violation of the Venezuelan constitution and the American Convention on Human Rights, and serves as an affront to the democratic principles of the Venezuelan people.

Nevertheless, Venezuelans continue to believe strongly in their constitution, the rule of law, and the doctrine of separation of powers. Many are publicly protesting in support of these principles and the disqualified candidates. One such candidate is Mr. Leopoldo López, Mayor of the Chacao district of Caracas and a political opponent of the current Venezuelan government.

Recent polls show that he is widely considered the most viable candidate for the mayoralty of Caracas, one of the most prominent elected offices in Venezuela. Mr. López has been an active leader in the Mayors Hemispheric Forum, an annual gathering of urban mayors from throughout the Americas designed to promote cooperation and integration in our hemisphere.

Through his work with the Mayor's Hemispheric Forum, Mr. López has emerged as a leader and a personal friend of the members of the forum. Publicly and privately, he has always shown a true commitment to promoting and pursuing democracy and freedom for Venezuelans and other citizens in the region. Unfortunately, he is now facing repercussions for simply attempting to uphold these beliefs and running for office.

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
August 11, 2008
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The United States Conference of Mayors stands in solidarity with the democratic aspirations of our Venezuelan colleagues and the people of Venezuela in order to ensure that their democratic, civil and human rights are honored and respected. It is imperative that we continue to support those who struggle to promote freedom and democracy in our hemisphere.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Manuel A. Diaz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Manuel A. Diaz, President
United States Conference of Mayors
Mayor of Miami