

103^D CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 250

Expressing the sense of the Congress in support of efforts by the Government of Mexico, and the major political parties and concerned members of civic society in Mexico, to reform Mexico's political and electoral processes and ensure free and fair elections.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 17, 1994

Mr. BONIOR (for himself, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. LAFALCE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mrs. MEEK, Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SERRANO, Mrs. THURMAN, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. WYNN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress in support of efforts by the Government of Mexico, and the major political parties and concerned members of civic society in Mexico, to reform Mexico's political and electoral processes and ensure free and fair elections.

Whereas the United States and Mexico share a common border;

Whereas the people of the United States and the people of Mexico have extensive cultural and historical ties that bind together families and communities across national boundaries;

Whereas a close relationship between the United States and Mexico, based on mutual respect and understanding, is important to the peoples of both nations;

Whereas the North American Free Trade Agreement, which is designed to increase trade, promote expanded economic activity, and enhance cooperation on issues of mutual interest between the United States and Mexico, entered into force on January 1, 1994;

Whereas the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement presents new opportunities for an even closer relationship between the United States and Mexico;

Whereas the development of such a relationship is currently hampered by several obstacles, including allegations of irregularities in Mexico's electoral process;

Whereas since 1929 Mexico's ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party has maintained exclusive control over Mexico's electoral apparatus, including voter registration lists and processes, vote tabulation systems, and all bodies responsible for election oversight, review, and certification;

Whereas assertions have previously surfaced that the ruling party has inappropriately manipulated this apparatus to win municipal, state, and federal elections;

Whereas specific instances of electoral irregularities and fraud were widely reported during elections held in the State of Yucatan in December 1993, including voter turnout rates that approached or exceeded 100 percent in at least 20 voting districts and a statewide electrical power failure as ballots were being counted;

Whereas specific instances of electoral fraud were widely reported during elections held in the State of Morelos in

March 1994, including massive manipulation of the electoral registry;

Whereas the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1993 outlines continuing reports of serious abuses of human rights and labor rights, and serious abuses of indigenous populations in Mexico, which many analysts trace to a lack of genuine democracy in Mexico's political system;

Whereas this history and pattern of events have contributed to growing concerns on the eve of national elections scheduled for August 1994 about political and social stability in Mexico, highlighted by armed unrest in the State of Chiapas, and by civil demonstrations calling for democratic reform throughout the country;

Whereas Mexican leaders from across the political spectrum have recognized the need for political and electoral reform and have begun to take steps to achieve these goals;

Whereas in January 1994 Mexico's major political parties joined together in an agreement, known as the Agreement for Peace, Democracy and Justice, designed to reform Mexico's electoral system and to establish procedures for free and fair elections;

Whereas this agreement calls for the establishment of an independent election-monitoring authority and requirements that all parties receive fair treatment by the mass media;

Whereas the Government of Mexico announced in February 1994 its intention to present an electoral reform package to a special legislative session of the Mexican Congress, including provisions that would place international visitors at polling stations, guarantee egalitarian media ac-

cess for all political parties, and put the Federal Electoral Institute under nonpartisan direction;

Whereas the Mexican Congress met in a special session in March 1994 to adopt the constitutional amendments that are needed to form the basis of these electoral reforms, and met in April and May 1994 to adopt the necessary statutory changes;

Whereas the presence of international observers can enhance the confidence of the Mexican people that their votes will be respected; and

Whereas the spirit of the North American Free Trade Agreement requires the United States and Mexico to cooperate in achieving high standards of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That the Congress—

3 (1) expresses its support for the efforts of the
4 Government of Mexico and the major political par-
5 ties and concerned members of civic society in Mex-
6 ico to reform that country's political and electoral
7 processes and to ensure free and fair elections;

8 (2) urges the Government of Mexico and the
9 major political parties and concerned members of
10 civic society in Mexico to implement fully in law and
11 in practice, in advance of the August 1994 elections,
12 the reforms enumerated in the Agreement for Peace,
13 Democracy and Justice of January 1994, includ-
14 ing—

1 (A) the establishment of impartial and au-
2 tonomous electoral authorities at the federal,
3 state, and local levels;

4 (B) guaranteed egalitarian access to the
5 media;

6 (C) assuring the reliability of the electoral
7 register and voter identification lists; and

8 (D) prohibition of the use of public re-
9 sources for the benefit of any political party or
10 electoral campaign; and

11 (3) endorses the invitation extended by the Gov-
12 ernment of Mexico, and the major political parties
13 and concerned members of civic society in Mexico, to
14 representatives of the United Nations to provide
15 technical assistance to domestic Mexican election ob-
16 servers, supports the expansion of that invitation to
17 include full scale international observation of the up-
18 coming elections, and encourages representatives of
19 the United Nations to work closely and directly with
20 domestic Mexican observers during that process.

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