

Reinforcing Nicaragua's Adherence to Conditions for Electoral Reform (RENACER) Act

Nicaragua will hold general elections in November 2021. The international community can play an important role in pressing for free, fair, and transparent electoral conditions in Nicaragua. In recent months, the Nicaraguan government has expanded its curtailment of media freedoms, passed laws to obstruct citizen mobilization, and accelerated persecution of political opponents. This bill requires the Executive branch to align U.S. diplomacy and existing targeted sanctions to advance democratic elections in Nicaragua, and includes new initiatives to address corruption, human rights abuses, and the curtailment of press freedom.

Sec. 2 – Findings: Includes findings on the Ortega government's efforts to curb fundamental rights and increase persecution of political opponents in the lead up to November 2021 elections.

Sec. 3 – Sense of Congress: Expresses opposition to laws and policies that suppress basic human rights and fundamental freedoms in Nicaragua.

Sec. 4 – Restrictions on International Financial Institutions Relating to Nicaragua: Amends the Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act of 2018 by expanding oversight mechanisms for IFI lending to Nicaragua and reaffirms the existing statutory waiver for humanitarian projects.

Sec. 5 – Targeted Sanctions to Advance Democratic Elections: Requires that the U.S. Government develop and implement a unified strategy to align diplomatic efforts and the use of targeted sanctions in order to promote free, fair, and transparent elections in Nicaragua.

Sec. 6 – Developing a Coordinated Sanctions Strategy with Diplomatic Partners: Requires the U.S. Government to pursue closer coordination with Canada and the European Union on diplomatic efforts and targeted sanctions in order to promote free, fair, and transparent elections.

Sec. 7 – Inclusion of Nicaragua in List of Countries Subject to Certain Sanctions relating to Corruption. Amends the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 by including Nicaragua in the list of countries subject to certain corruption-related restrictions.

Sec. 8 – Classified Report on the Involvement of Ortega Family Members and Nicaraguan Government Officials in Corruption. Requires classified reporting on significant acts of public corruption in Nicaragua involving President Ortega, his family, and government officials.

Sec. 9 – Classified Report on the Activities of the Russian Federation in Nicaragua. Requires classified reporting on Russian government activities in Nicaragua.

Sec. 10 – Report on Human Rights Abuses in the Interior of Nicaragua. Requires reporting on gross human rights violations perpetrated by the Ortega government against campesinos, indigenous communities, and civil society in the interior of Nicaragua.

Sec. 11 – Supporting Independent News Media and Freedom of Information in Nicaragua. Requires reporting on the Ortega government's harassment of independent media outlets and a strategy for how the U.S. Government can support press freedom in Nicaragua.