

United States Senate

April 23, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

The United States has made tremendous progress in the development and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. Thanks to the United States government's advance purchase agreements and assistance in rapidly scaling the manufacturing capacity for multiple COVID-19 vaccines, including the Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca vaccines, it is estimated that the U.S. will have upwards of 300 million extra vaccine doses by the end of July.¹

We will not be successful in ending this pandemic until every American and everyone around the world who wants a vaccine can get one. Americans must be prioritized in vaccine distribution, but as you consider how to distribute the millions of excess vaccines, and the possibility of donating part of our vaccine supply to nations in need, I hope you will give thought to the ongoing situation in Venezuela. Right now, Nicolás Maduro is only distributing vaccines to those who have pledged political loyalty to him and his socialist dictatorship.² That means Venezuelans who support democracy and the democratically-elected President Juan Guaidó are refused the vaccine. This is just another tactic by Maduro to further oppress his people, who already suffer horribly under his regime.

¹ "Reducing Global COVID Vaccine Shortages: New Research and Recommendations for US Leadership," April 15, 2021.

<https://launchandscalefaster.org/sites/default/files/documents/US%20Leadership%20for%20Global%20Vaccines.pdf>

² Nicolle Yapur and Alex Vasquez, "Venezuela Politicizes Vaccine Access Via State Loyalty Card." *Bloomberg*, April 14, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-14/venezuela-politicizes-access-to-vaccines-via-state-loyalty-card>

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Maduro's actions are beyond the pale – they show how far he is willing to go to maintain his grip on power, and that he is willing to allow Venezuelans to suffer for his own increase in political loyalty.

The United States must always fight for those living under political oppression and being denied the right to live freely, and that is why I urge you to consider the plight of Venezuelans and those suffering under similar political and humanitarian crises. We see the light at the end of this tunnel, but it will take a coordinated, global effort to reach our goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott
United States Senator