

CONGRESSWOMAN MARÍA E. SALAZAR
27TH DISTRICT OF FLORIDA



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

May 29th, 2025

The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary
Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Bessent and Secretary Rubio,

I write to express my ongoing concerns regarding the forced sale of the democratic Venezuelan National Assembly's ownership interest in the U.S. oil refiner CITGO. In 2019, the Trump administration empowered the democratic opposition by granting them control of Venezuela's overseas assets. Unfortunately, that control was undermined by the Biden administration, which allowed the regime's creditors to pursue their claims against those assets using U.S. courts. I urge the Administration to continue to exercise its constitutional powers to maintain the full blocking protection that the Trump Administration put in place in 2019 to safeguard CITGO in the service of U.S. foreign policy, energy security and national security concerns and engage directly with Venezuela's democratic leaders to determine a path forward for this strategic sovereign asset.

CITGO is vital to the future of democracy in Venezuela.

During his first term, President Trump transferred control of CITGO from the hands of the Maduro Regime to the democratic opposition based in the United States. They have stewarded CITGO ever since then through difficult economic and political times. CITGO needs to remain in hands of the opposition in order to be able to reconstruct Venezuela after the regime falls.

Maduro and his cronies stole the money, they should pay.

The plaintiffs against CITGO are really plaintiffs against Maduro and the Chavista crooks that ran PDVSA in Venezuela into the ground. The Venezuelan opposition desperately trying to restore freedom to their country shouldn't have to pay the debts of Maduro and his cronies.

Stop the sale process and save CITGO from dismemberment.

I urge the Administration to bar the continuation of the sale process through its economic powers, revoke the previous administration's favorable sanctions licensing policy regarding the sale announced in May 2023, and explore options to find an equitable and orderly settlement of claims against the Republic of Venezuela and PDVSA.

We need to give a chance to bring freedom and democracy back to Venezuela – CITGO can play a key role in that process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Elvira Salazar'.

Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress