

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 820

Commending Luis A. Rivas Anduray.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 21, 2023
Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 2023

WHEREAS, Luis A. Rivas Anduray first came to the United States as a political asylee in 1987 from Nicaragua during a time of great unrest under the Sandinista regime, which installed an 11-year dictatorship in Nicaragua; and

WHEREAS, Rivas Anduray, valuing the principles of freedom and democracy, received his residency in the United States and obtained a doctorate in economics from Cornell University before returning to Nicaragua to work as an economic advisor to the democratic government of President Enrique Bolanos; and

WHEREAS, most of Rivas Anduray's family stayed in the United States where they eventually became citizens; and

WHEREAS, Rivas Anduray's decision to return to Nicaragua was out of a deep and abiding love for his native homeland and a desire to contribute to Nicaragua's economic and social development under the democratic leadership of President Bolanos; and

WHEREAS, after returning to Nicaragua, Rivas Anduray played a key role in the development of Nicaragua's banking industry as an economic advisor to President Bolanos; and

WHEREAS, Rivas Anduray served as the chief executive officer of Nicaragua's largest bank for 15 years and then moved on to lead a large banking conglomerate known for its focus on innovation and technology along with its commitment to social responsibility and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 2018, Nicaragua faced a social and political crisis, which ultimately culminated in a violent response from the government, resulting in the detention of thousands of citizens, including opposition leaders, activists, journalists, and students; and

WHEREAS, as the 2021 presidential election was approaching, the Nicaraguan government arrested all presidential candidates and other leaders from the political opposition as well as private sector leaders; and

WHEREAS, given Rivas Anduray's pivotal role in forming a united primary process for the opposition who intended to run for president, he was detained, charged, and found guilty of conspiracy; and

WHEREAS, according to human rights organizations, the conditions in which Rivas Anduray and other prisoners were held have been criticized as inhumane, and many of the prisoners have reported being subjected to torture and ill-treatment; and

WHEREAS, the Nicaraguan government had denied the existence of political prisoners, claiming that those in custody had broken the law; international organizations and governments rejected this argument and continued to pressure the Nicaraguan government to release political prisoners and respect human rights; and

WHEREAS, after prolonged discussions, the Nicaraguan government finally released over 200 political prisoners, who were delivered to the United States following an unprecedented operation by the U.S. Department of State; among these political prisoners was Rivas Anduray, who was granted humanitarian parole to obtain political asylum by the United States; and

WHEREAS, immediately following their release, the Nicaraguan government altered the constitution to strip these individuals, including Rivas Anduray, of their nationality and confiscate all their property; and

WHEREAS, despite this prolonged detainment and mistreatment, Rivas Anduray continues to have a deep and abiding commitment to his native homeland; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Luis A. Rivas Anduray for his commitment to freedom and the values that all Virginians and Americans hold so dear; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Luis A. Rivas Anduray as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his dedication to freedom and democratic values.

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