

MAR 16 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO RESTORE THE
PRIOR FORMAT, ORGANIZATION, AND SUBSTANTIVE COMPLETENESS OF
THE COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES.

1 WHEREAS, the United States has long asserted a national
2 commitment to democracy, liberty, justice, and the rule of law;
3 and
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5 WHEREAS, the United States Department of State's *Country*
6 *Reports on Human Rights Practices* have, for decades, served as a
7 significant public record of internationally recognized human
8 rights conditions throughout the world; and
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10 WHEREAS, those reports have historically informed Congress,
11 policymakers, advocates, journalists, scholars, and the
12 international community regarding abuses committed by foreign
13 governments and other actors, including arbitrary detentions,
14 denials of due process, examples of corruption, restrictions on
15 political participation, suppressions of speech and assembly,
16 mistreatment of prisoners, and violence against vulnerable
17 populations; and
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19 WHEREAS, comprehensive and candid reporting on human rights
20 conditions advances accountability, promotes transparency, and
21 reinforces the credibility of the United States in matters
22 involving democracy and fundamental freedoms; and
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24 WHEREAS, federal law contemplates the submission of full
25 and complete reports concerning internationally recognized human
26 rights; and
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28 WHEREAS, on April 18, 2025, National Public Radio indicated
29 that the United States Department of State had revised the
30 format and scope of these reports to remove or reduce
31 discussions of certain categories of concern that had
32 traditionally appeared in prior reports, including discussions
33 on prison conditions, corruption, restrictions on freedom of
34 movement and peaceful assembly, political-process restrictions,
35 interference with privacy, internet freedom, harassment of human



1 rights organizations, gender-based violence, and certain due-
2 process concerns; and

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4 WHEREAS, the omission or minimization of this information
5 may impair the usefulness, comparability, and credibility of the
6 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* as instruments of
7 public accountability; and

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9 WHEREAS, official reporting that is thorough, consistent,
10 and specific is especially important for persons subjected to
11 repression, arbitrary detention, political imprisonment, or
12 other abuses in jurisdictions governed by authoritarian or
13 repressive regimes; and

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15 WHEREAS, the preservation of meaningful reporting on human
16 rights is consistent with the principles of freedom, liberty,
17 and justice for all and with the role of democratic institutions
18 in bearing witness to abuse and affirming the dignity of all
19 persons; now, therefore,

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21 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
22 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
23 that the United States Department of State is urged to restore
24 the prior format, organization, and substantive completeness of
25 the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* so that the
26 reports continue to provide full, credible, and comprehensive
27 accounts of internationally recognized human rights conditions;
28 and

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body affirms the
31 importance of accountability for human rights violations and the
32 continuing value of democratic institutions that protect and
33 promote freedom, liberty, justice, and the rule of law; and

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body condemns the federal
36 government's decision to substantially revise the *Country*
37 *Reports on Human Rights Practices* in a manner that diminishes
38 the reporting of serious abuses, undermines the reports'
39 completeness and credibility, erodes transparency, weakens a
40 longstanding instrument of democratic accountability for human
41 rights violations, represents a serious retreat from the
42 principles of democratic governance and the rule of law, and



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1 departs from the United States' established commitment to candid
2 and comprehensive human rights reporting; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body respectfully urges
5 the United States Department of State to ensure that future
6 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* fully and consistently
7 document all material categories of abuse and conditions
8 relevant to evaluating the protection of human rights around the
9 world; and
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
12 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States,
13 Vice President of the United States, Secretary of State, Chair
14 of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,
15 Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and
16 members of Hawaii's congressional delegation.
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OFFERED BY: Karl Rhoads

