

Preamble Amendment

AMENDMENT NO. _____ Calendar No. _____

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—117th Cong., 1st Sess.

S. Res. 345

Expressing the sense of the Senate on the political situation
in Belarus.

Referred to the Committee on _____ and
ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended
to be proposed by Mrs. SHAHEEN

Viz:

1 Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the United States Senate has long maintained strong bipartisan concern regarding the troubling lack of democracy in Belarus, highlighted by the passing of the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–347; 22 U.S.C. 5811 note);

Whereas the 116th Congress, as referenced in H.R. 8438, the Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020, and Senate Resolution 658, which both passed with unanimous support, stated its deep concern regarding the fraudulent election in Belarus on August 9, 2020;

Whereas on September 17, 2020, the Moscow Mechanism of the human dimension of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was invoked by 17 participating states with regard to credible reports of

human rights violations before, during, and after the presidential election of August 9, 2020, in Belarus;

Whereas, following Alyaksandr Lukashenka's inauguration on September 23, 2020, the United States, the European Union, numerous European Union member states, the United Kingdom, and Canada announced they did not recognize the legitimacy of the election results;

Whereas after the August 9, 2020 presidential election, the Government of Belarus responded to the resulting peaceful protests, the largest in the country's history, with a violent crackdown, including the detention of more than 10,000 peaceful protectors, according to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus;

Whereas the Government of Belarus, under the misrule of the Lukashenka regime, continues to engage in a pattern of clear and persistent violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and disrespects the basic principles of democratic governance by subjecting tens of thousands of pro-democracy political activists, peaceful protesters, and ordinary citizens to harassment, beatings, abductions, forced deportations, and imprisonment and by committing acts of transnational repression to punish any dissent expressed by Belarusian citizens;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime continues to silence independent media, such as Nasha Niva, tut.by, and Belsat, and has unlawfully raided the offices of media outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and arrested journalists;

Whereas on September 11, 2020, then-Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said that "we stand by our long-

term commitment to support the sovereignty of Belarus as well as its territorial integrity, as the aspirations of the Belarusian people to determine their own path remains in front of us”;

Whereas on May 23, 2021, the Lukashenka regime forced a commercial airliner flying between two European Union member states to land in Minsk in order for the regime to arrest journalist Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, a violation of international law resulting in near universal condemnation from the international community and coordinated sanctions by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union;

Whereas on May 28, 2021, the White House announced the re-imposition of full blocking sanctions against nine Belarusian state-owned enterprises and announced a new Executive order to increase sanctions on elements of the Lukashenka regime;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime has actively encouraged or forced at gunpoint more than 4,000 migrants from other countries to cross through Belarus into European Union member states Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, amounting to people smuggling and obliging these countries to declare a state of emergency;

Whereas on June 9, 2021, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate held a hearing regarding the political situation in Belarus, in which United States Ambassador to Belarus Julie Fisher testified that “Despite the oppression, the violence, and the turmoil that followed the events of the past year provide glimmers of hope. A new generation of brave Belarusians, with courageous women at the front, have emerged. They represent a Belarus determined to chart its own path. They represent a Belarus

in which wearing a red and white dress, hanging a flag, or playing a particular song will not result in torture, forced confessions, or even death.”;

Whereas on July 27, 2021, President Biden met Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya at the White House and declared that “The United States stands with the people of Belarus in their quest for democracy and universal human rights.”;

Whereas on August 9, 2021, President Biden—

(1) announced an Executive order authorizing the imposition of blocking sanctions on certain sectors of the Belarus economy, including the potash, tobacco products, and construction sectors; and

(2) pursuant to such executive order and Executive Order 13405, issued additional sanctions on Belarusian individuals and entities, including Belaruskali (a state-owned potash fertilizer company) and the Belarus National Olympic Committee; and

Whereas Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya continues to represent the widely shared desire of the Belarusian people for free and fair elections and democracy: Now, therefore, be it