

HR 8438

Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020

Congress: 116 (2019–2021, Ended)

Chamber: House

Policy Area: International Affairs

Introduced: Sep 29, 2020

Current Status: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Latest Action: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. (Nov 30, 2020)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/8438>

Sponsor

Name: Rep. Smith, Christopher H. [R-NJ-4]

Party: Republican • **State:** NJ • **Chamber:** House

Cosponsors (15 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Engel, Eliot L. [D-NY-16]	D · NY		Sep 29, 2020
Rep. Kaptur, Marcy [D-OH-9]	D · OH		Sep 29, 2020
Rep. Keating, William R. [D-MA-9]	D · MA		Sep 29, 2020
Rep. Kinzinger, Adam [R-IL-16]	R · IL		Sep 29, 2020
Rep. McCaul, Michael T. [R-TX-10]	R · TX		Sep 29, 2020
Rep. Cicilline, David N. [D-RI-1]	D · RI		Sep 30, 2020
Rep. Deutch, Theodore E. [D-FL-22]	D · FL		Sep 30, 2020
Rep. Fitzpatrick, Brian K. [R-PA-1]	R · PA		Sep 30, 2020
Rep. Cohen, Steve [D-TN-9]	D · TN		Oct 9, 2020
Rep. Phillips, Dean [D-MN-3]	D · MN		Oct 9, 2020
Rep. Sherman, Brad [D-CA-30]	D · CA		Oct 9, 2020
Rep. Spanberger, Abigail Davis [D-VA-7]	D · VA		Oct 9, 2020
Del. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At Large]	D · DC		Oct 23, 2020
Rep. Waters, Maxine [D-CA-43]	D · CA		Nov 16, 2020
Rep. Kind, Ron [D-WI-3]	D · WI		Nov 18, 2020

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Financial Services Committee	House	Referred To	Sep 29, 2020
Foreign Affairs Committee	House	Markup By	Oct 1, 2020
Foreign Relations Committee	Senate	Referred To	Nov 30, 2020
Judiciary Committee	House	Referred To	Sep 29, 2020

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

International Affairs

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

Summary (as of Nov 18, 2020)

Belarus Democracy, Human Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020

This bill expands the President's authority to impose sanctions related to Belarus to include activities surrounding the disputed 2020 Belarusian presidential election and subsequent government crackdown. The bill also expands authorized assistance to Belarus.

The President may impose visa-blocking sanctions on any alien who (1) is a member of the Central Election Commission of Belarus or assisted in the manipulation of the August 9, 2020, presidential election, (2) is a government official responsible for the crackdown on independent media, (3) is an official of the Union State (an international organization consisting of Belarus and Russia), or (4) is a Russian individual who has significantly participated in the crackdown on the press or human rights abuses related to political repression in Belarus. (The President already has authority to impose such sanctions on certain aliens, such as senior leaders in the government of Belarus.)

The bill also expands authorized assistance related to Belarus to include assistance to (1) counter internet censorship and surveillance technology, (2) support the work of women advocating for freedom and human rights, and (3) support political refugees fleeing the crackdown in Belarus.

Actions Timeline

- **Nov 30, 2020:** Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.
- **Nov 18, 2020:** Mr. Espallat moved to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.
- **Nov 18, 2020:** Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H5915-5920)
- **Nov 18, 2020:** DEBATE - The House proceeded with forty minutes of debate on H.R. 8438.
- **Nov 18, 2020:** Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by voice vote.(text: CR H5915-5917)
- **Nov 18, 2020:** On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by voice vote. (text: CR H5915-5917)
- **Nov 18, 2020:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Oct 1, 2020:** Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
- **Oct 1, 2020:** Ordered to be Reported by Voice Vote.
- **Sep 29, 2020:** Introduced in House
- **Sep 29, 2020:** Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.