



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Statement by Reps. Wild, Grijalva on 2021 Presidential Election Runoff in Chile

We, the undersigned members of the U.S. Congress, express our alarm regarding the spread of anti-democratic and xenophobic extremism in the leadup to the December 19 runoff that will determine Chile’s next president—and, possibly, its future as a democracy.

This election should, can, and will be decided only by Chilean voters. However, it is precisely because of the tragic history of interference in Chilean democracy—including the role of the United States government in supporting the 1973 military coup that led to the brutal, decades-long dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet—that we have decided to speak out today.

By praising, seeking to justify, and working to rehabilitate Pinochet’s horrific legacy of human rights violations, one of the two finalists in the runoff is threatening to roll back the gains that generations of Chileans have made. Emerging from the collective trauma of a dictatorship marked by the torture, imprisonment, “disappearances”, and targeted assassinations of countless innocent people, the Chilean people rebuilt democratic institutions. Recently, the country took a historic step forward by beginning the process of approving a new national constitution—finally turning the page from the entrenched injustices and inequities carried over from the Pinochet era.

As representatives who personally experienced the attempt to violently challenge a free and fair presidential election on January 6, 2021, we have seen glimpses of the same politics of authoritarianism and xenophobia that gave rise to the Pinochet dictatorship and that has come to threaten democratic values across our societies—here in the United States and around the globe.

Democracy is fragile. In a spirit of solidarity and friendship, we urge the Chilean people to rise above the forces of oppression, hatred, and division.

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress