

H. Res. 91

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

April 3, 2001.

Whereas, according to the Department of State and international human rights organizations, the Government of Cuba continues to commit widespread and well-documented human rights violations against the Cuban people and to detain hundreds more as political prisoners;

Whereas the Castro regime systematically violates all of the fundamental civil and political rights of the Cuban people, denying freedoms of speech, press, assembly, movement, religion, and association, the right to change their government, and the right to due process and fair trials;

Whereas, in law and in practice, the Government of Cuba restricts the freedom of religion of the Cuban people and engages in efforts to control and monitor religious institutions through surveillance, infiltration, evictions, restrictions on access to computer and communication equipment, and harassment of religious professionals and lay persons;

Whereas the totalitarian regime of Fidel Castro actively suppresses all peaceful opposition and dissent by the Cuban people using undercover agents, informers, rapid response brigades, Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, surveillance, phone tapping, intimidation, defamation, arbitrary detention, house arrest, arbitrary searches, evic-

tions, travel restrictions, politically-motivated dismissals from employment, and forced exile;

Whereas workers' rights are effectively denied by a system in which foreign investors are forced to contract labor from the Government of Cuba and to pay the regime in hard currency knowing that the regime will pay less than 5 percent of these wages in local currency to the workers themselves;

Whereas these abuses by the Government of Cuba violate internationally accepted norms of conduct;

Whereas the House of Representatives is mindful of the admonishment of former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo during the last Ibero-American Summit in Havana, Cuba, that "[t]here can be no sovereign nations without free men and women [. . . m]en and women who can freely exercise their essential freedoms: freedom of thought and opinion, freedom of participation, freedom of dissent, freedom of decision";

Whereas President Vaclav Havel, an essential figure in the Czech Republic's transition to democracy, has counseled that "[w]e thus know that by voicing open criticism of undemocratic conditions in Cuba, we encourage all the brave Cubans who endure persecution and years of prison for their loyalty to the ideals of freedom and human dignity";

Whereas former President Lech Walesa, leader of the Polish solidarity movement, has urged the world to "mobilize its resources, just as was done in support of Polish Solidarnosc and the Polish workers, to express their support for Cuban workers and to monitor labor rights" in Cuba;

Whereas efforts to document, expose, and address human rights abuses in Cuba are complicated by the fact that the Government of Cuba continues to deny international human rights and humanitarian monitors access to the country;

Whereas Pax Christi further reports that these efforts are complicated because “a conspiracy of silence has fallen over Cuba” in which diplomats and entrepreneurs refuse even to discuss labor rights and other human rights issues in Cuba, some “for fear of endangering the relations with the Cuban government”, and businessmen investing in Cuba “openly declare that the theme of human rights was not of their concern”;

Whereas the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva provides an excellent forum to spotlight human rights and expressing international support for improved human rights performance in Cuba and elsewhere;

Whereas the goal of United States policy in Cuba is to promote a peaceful transition to democracy through an active policy of assisting the forces of change on the island;

Whereas the United States may provide assistance through appropriate nongovernmental organizations to help individuals and organizations to promote nonviolent democratic change and promote respect for human rights in Cuba; and

Whereas the President is authorized to engage in democracy-building efforts in Cuba, including the provision of (1) publications and other informational materials on transitions to democracy, human rights, and market economies to independent groups in Cuba, (2) humanitarian assist-

ance to victims of political repression and their families, (3) support for democratic and human rights groups in Cuba, and (4) support for visits and permanent deployment of democratic and international human rights monitors in Cuba: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the House of Representatives condemns the repressive and totalitarian actions of the Government of Cuba against the Cuban people; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the President—

(A) should have an action-oriented policy of directly assisting the Cuban people and independent organizations, modeled on United States support under former President Ronald Reagan, including support by United States trade unions, for Poland's Solidarity movement (“Solidarnosc”), to strengthen the forces of change and to improve human rights within Cuba; and

(B) should make all efforts necessary at the meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva in 2001 to obtain the passage by the Commission of a resolution condemning the Government of Cuba for its human rights abuses,

and to secure the appointment of a Special
Rapporteur for Cuba.

Attest:

Clerk.