

Helms-Burton law has been effective. Indeed, it has been a success.

Despite the decision by the Clinton administration to waive title III of the law, which is the provision that grants U.S. citizens the right to file a lawsuit against those investors who traffic in their property, the Helms-Burton law has had a significant chilling effect on the level of foreign investments flowing to the Castro regime.

Even top officials of the Castro regime have asserted the damaging effects of Helms-Burton on Castro's slave economy.

Dozens of companies have pulled out of Cuba following the implementation of the law. Some of them included Bow Valley Industries of Canada, Grupo Vitro of Mexico, Guitart of Spain, and Pemex of Mexico, among others.

Other firms, like British BAT and Beta Gran Caribe and Heenan Blauy of Canada put their operations on hold to reassess their commercial and legal risks under Helms-Burton.

Also, Grupo Damos, the large Mexican telecommunications conglomerate, recently announced plans to withdraw its offer to create a joint venture with the Cuban regime to rehabilitate the Cuban domestic telephone system.

Grupo Damos, which last year, along with the Cuban Government, announced with great fanfare this contract, failed to obtain the necessary financing to cover its obligations under the agreement.

Perhaps the most damaging effect has been on Castro's ability to finance Cuba's sugar crop, one of the regime's main sources of hard currency.

Last fall the Dutch bank, ING, pulled its financing of equipment destined for Cuba's sugar harvest. As a result, the Cuban sugar harvest is expected to be below what was expected before.

The report states that top Castro officials fault the Helms-Burton law as the cause of the problems for the regime.

Helms-Burton has helped reduce the growth of Castro's slave economy, thus weakening the regime's ability to hold on to power.

Let us remember that before the Helms-Burton law took effect, foreign investors were free to profit from legitimate American property stolen by Fidel Castro in order to exploit the Cuban worker, who enjoys no rights and no freedoms.

Castro's economy was described by a Canadian business journal as a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. And why not? In Cuba's slave economy, the one in which many of our allies willingly and immorally participate, Castro profits while the Cuban worker suffers.

Once foreign companies are approved by the regime for investments, the Cuban Government selects the workers who will labor in the industry. The Cuban Government collects the worker's wages in dollars, estimated at about \$2,000 a month, and then pays the worker in worthless Cuban pesos, about \$10 a month.

Moreover, the companies do not have to worry about bothersome workers' rights, including the right to form labor unions, and there are no health standards nor environmental standards. Castro has one mission, obtain foreign currency, and he will do it by sacrificing the Cuban worker, or anything else that he has at his disposal.

While Helms-Burton has undoubtedly served its purpose so far, disappointing has been the reaction of our allies, particularly Canada and the European Union. The European Union has already filed a ridiculous and irresponsible challenge to Helms-Burton before the World Trade Organization. Apparently our European friends believe that our Nation has no right to determine our own foreign policy.

Even more shameful has been the behavior of Canada, a nation that has sacrificed its long reputation of promoting human rights and democracy in favor of making a quick profit off of stolen property and the exploited Cuban worker.

On a recent visit to Canada to lambast the Helms-Burton law, Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy highlighted the signature of an agreement with the Castro regime supporting the protection of human rights. At almost the same moment that fake document was signed, dozens of dissidents and independent journalists were being rounded up by Castro's thugs.

Helms-Burton has been a success, and we will not wait in our attempts to making sure that property rights of American citizens will be protected.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. SOUDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

MEXICO DOES NOT DESERVE CERTIFICATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House tonight to talk about the question of whether or not the House should certify Mexico or decertify Mexico.

As my colleagues may know, the administration just recently certified Mexico as being cooperative in trying to stem the flow of drugs and illegal narcotics from that country under a certification law that, as a staffer in the other body some years ago, I had a chance to help develop.

Today, we have seen around the Capitol, scurrying around the Capitol Building, the Ambassador from Mexico and various lobbyists on various sides of the issue. But I come before the

House tonight to say not to weaken, not to cave in to the Ambassador, not to cave in to interests, trade interests or other interests, and put them before the only interests we, as representatives of the people, should be representing in the people's House, and that is the safety of our children, the safety of our schools, the safety of our streets and the very security of this Nation that I think is at jeopardy with the current situation.

Now, the question before us is whether Mexico is helping to eradicate and stop the flow of drugs. Let me talk not about what I know, but the facts that we have gathered and what others have said.

Mr. Speaker, I serve on the Subcommittee on National Security, International Affairs, and Criminal Justice that does the oversight on our national drug policy. Just prior to the certification in the House of Representatives, I was stunned, as a member of that committee, to hear Tom Constantine, the head of our Drug Enforcement Administration, the head of DEA, when he came before us just days before this administration certified Mexico. What did he say? Let me quote. "There is not a single law enforcement institution in Mexico with whom DEA has a trusting relationship."

Those are his words, not my words, words before Congress about who we can trust with cooperation. I was stunned today to hear the Ambassador from Mexico tell me that a level of cooperation unprecedented exists. Well, how can a level of cooperation exist when the DEA head says that there is not a single law enforcement institution in Mexico with whom DEA, our chief law enforcement in the drug war, has a relationship?

Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gelbard came before our committee, again just days within this certification by the administration, and said, "There is persistent and widespread official corruption throughout Mexico." And then today the administration sent folks up here to lobby us not to decertify Mexico.

Now, I know trade is important in our relationship with Mexico. It is important and there is probably billions of dollars at stake here. But there are the lives of our young people, the safety of our streets. Our senior citizens cannot sleep in their own beds at night because of fear of being broken in by someone.

Just look at the statistics. At least 200 tons of cocaine entered the United States from Mexico last year. That is 70 percent of the cocaine. This used to come through Colombia, now it comes through Mexico. In testimony before our subcommittee it was stated that just a small amount a few years ago of brown heroin came through Mexico. Now, 30 percent of all the heroin that is killing our children and our people is coming through Mexico. Over 150 tons of methamphetamines that are destroying young people in the Midwest

and the West, and heading toward the East Coast, and has become the new drug of choice, is coming through Mexico.

Mexico has failed to cooperate. They have failed to extradite. They have failed to put radar on their borders. They have failed to allow our DEA agents to go there. They have denied allowing our DEA agents to protect themselves by arming themselves. They have also subverted our attempts to have a solid maritime agreement. They have also left vetted units, which we have trained in Mexico City.

They are not doing the job. They do not deserve our certification, and they deserve this week to be decertified for these actions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. KINGSTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRBACHER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. ROHRBACHER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

UNITED STATES ONLY ADVANCED NATION NOT TO PROVIDE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL ITS PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DAVIS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, today, like every day in America, 788 babies will be born at a low birthweight. They will start life at risk. We rank 18th in the industrialized world in the percentage of babies born at dangerously low birth weight.

Let me put it another way: No industrialized country in the world does worse. Our infant mortality rate is 8.4 per 1,000 live births. We rank 18th in the industrialized world in infant mortality.

Sometimes it takes a poet to put our feelings into words when we hear such statistics. Gwendolyn Brooks, poet laureate of Illinois, penned this question: "What shall I give my children who are poor, who are judged the least wise of the land?"

Mr. Speaker, we keep asking the question, "What shall we give our children?" We are the only advanced Nation in the world that does not provide health care for all of its people.

According to the GAO, some 10 million children, 1 in 7 in the United States, are uninsured, the highest level since 1987, before Medicaid expansions for children and pregnant women. One

child in four in the United States is now covered by Medicaid. The percentage of children with private insurance reached the lowest level in 8 years: 65.6 percent.

How do we describe the emotion of seeing a child suffering a severe asthma attack; turning blue while their chest and stomach attempts to breathe? Yet more than half of the uninsured children with asthma will not see a doctor this year. Some of them will die from asthma, a preventable disease.

How do we describe the cries of a child with an ear infection? Only a parent knows the feeling of helplessness that comes when you cannot relieve your child's pain. Yet one-third of the uninsured children with recurrent ear infections never see a doctor. Many suffer permanent hearing loss.

Only 75 percent of preschoolers are getting the recommended vaccinations. Some 1 million still need one or more doses. In many of our big cities, like Chicago, the immunization rate is less than 65 percent.

What shall we give our children?

Twelve percent of child deaths are excess deaths. Excess is the medical term meaning that these deaths were preventable. How can a Nation such as ours accept 12 percent excessive deaths?

What shall we give our children?

Almost 45 percent of all 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families participate in center-based care. By every measure of health care status, low birth weight, prematurity, infant mortality, likelihood of injury, malnutrition, incidence of infectious disease, poor children fare worse than any others. However, only Head Start routinely provides preventive health and dental care treatment.

It is estimated that the \$54 billion cut from the safety net last year will push more than 1 million additional children into poverty and millions more will be pushed even deeper into poverty.

The poet June Jordan warned us "Our children will not survive our habits of thinking, our failures of the spirit." If all of the promise of democracy is to mean anything, if all of the incredible wealth we have accumulated is to mean anything, if all of the work, the struggle, the suffering, the dreaming, the devotion that make this country what it is today is to mean anything, then we must answer the question: "What shall we give our children?"

Let us give them a chance. Let us at least make their health a right and not a privilege. Let us make sure that in this Congress every child will have access to quality health care when he or she is sick, regardless of the ability of their parents to pay. Let us make sure that every mother receives prenatal care regardless of ability to pay. Let us make sure that every child receives preventive care regardless of the ability of their parents to pay.

□ 1830

A guarantee of quality accessible health care for every child cannot be the full answer to the question, but we must give our children nothing less.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. STEARNS]. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. SANFORD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I had the good fortune this past weekend of going to the bipartisan retreat in Hershey, PA. There we discussed many issues, many problems common to the Congress, but one thing that we did not discuss was a thing called Social Security.

What is interesting about this issue is that not only is Congress not talking about it right now but the White House is not talking about it. Yet by anybody's definition, Social Security is on its way toward bankruptcy because what the trustees have said, and let me say that again, what the trustees have said, not what Republicans have said, not what Democrats have said, not what Ross Perot has said, but what the trustees have said is that if we do nothing, Social Security will go bankrupt in 2029 and it will begin to run deficits in 2012 such that either current benefits have to be cut by about 14 percent at that time or payroll taxes have to be raised by about 16 percent.

Any of the young folks that I talk to say, "I don't like the idea of payroll taxes going up by another 16 percent." Any of the older folks I talk to say, MARK, the idea of cutting benefits by 14 percent is just not acceptable."

And so what you are struck with is, is there another way out? I think that brings us to some very good news that there is another way out because what has been tried in a host of places around the globe, whether it is in a number of countries in South America or whether it is with changes being made in Australia or with changes being made in Great Britain or in a number of countries or even States within our own country, what folks have tried is the idea of personal savings accounts. When you switch from a system of sending your money to Washington and then hoping it comes back 30 or 40 years later to instead a series of personal savings accounts, wherein it is a public-private partnership, it is still a mandatory savings, it is still watched by the Government. Again, if one wants to, I guess, go gambling, you would go to Las Vegas, you would not use these accounts, so it is controlled, but by having money in your own personal savings accounts, a number of very good things seem to happen. One is that you save Social Security because again by the trustees' own numbers, the current rate of return for most people out there working