

A BETTER POLICY TOWARD CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, our policy toward Cuba should be one area where Democrats and Republicans can find common ground.

There are not many communist countries left, but let's consider that, when it came to the old Soviet bloc or China and Vietnam today, we have agreed on the basics. We all differ with their human rights practices, and we say so.

We stand up for our security interests. We cooperate when we can. We support trade and citizen contact because they are good for our economy and they increase our influence.

In this vein, let me praise a few Republicans:

President Nixon for the opening to China;

President Ford for the Helsinki Accords and the principle that people and information should flow freely across borders;

President Reagan for vastly expanding engagement with the Soviet Union and its people.

These are big achievements, none of them terribly controversial, but Cuba is an exception. Only with Cuba do we regulate our own citizens' contact. Only there do we have a trade embargo that limits trade and investment: six decades of embargo, a virtual lifetime of foreign policy failure.

President Trump clearly realized this as a candidate when he supported President Obama's opening to Cuba. It was a good idea to bring Cuba "into the fold," he said. Later, he changed his view.

Now, led by his White House staff, he wants to respond to Cuba's support for the Government of Venezuela by increasing U.S. economic sanctions against Cuba.

This is a mistake. It will do nothing to change Cuba's conduct; it will not improve the situation in Venezuela; and it will harm American interests.

Specifically, he is considering allowing title 3 of the Helms-Burton Act to go into effect. This will allow Americans who lost property in Cuba, including Cubans who later became U.S. citizens, to go to U.S. courts to seek damages—three times the value of their property—by suing Cuba, foreign, and even American companies whose businesses in Cuba today are connected to those properties.

The purpose, as the law's authors made clear in 1996, is to harm Cuba's economy by making it completely inhospitable for foreign investment.

Now, it is no mystery why Presidents Clinton, Bush, Obama, and Trump blocked title 3 from going into effect every 6 months for the past 23 years. It is hypocritical. It penalizes companies for doing what American companies do all over the world. It is contrary to international law, which recognizes the right of expropriation and requires compensation.

It is an extraterritorial sanction that guarantees a response from our trading partners, like Canada, Spain, and the EU, including complaints at the World Trade Organization.

And if you care about agriculture, be warned:

It will open a new front in the trade war, with all the repercussions that can bring;

It will allow Cuba to claim victim status and rally international support; It will clog our courts with lawsuits;

It will make it impossible to negotiate compensation for U.S. claims in Cuba and, in the end, hurt the very Americans who seek compensation for property they lost;

It will divide us from friends and allies who are now working for a peaceful solution in Venezuela; and

It will guarantee that new investment in Cuba will come from the Russians, Chinese, and others who are hostile to the United States and whose Stated-owned companies can't be sued in U.S. courts.

Once again, the U.S. will be pursuing a strategy that has failed over and over and over again for absolutely no good result.

Madam Speaker, there is a better way that deserves vocal, bipartisan support.

We should continue to press Cuba on human rights. With our Latin American and European allies, we should challenge Cuba to play a constructive role in resolving the crisis in Venezuela, as it did in the Colombian peace process.

There are positive changes in Cuba to support: There is growing Internet access, and there is more political space for Cuban citizens, a growing private sector that now accounts for a third of Cuba's labor force. And despite policies that limit contact, there are rich cultural, educational, and intellectual exchanges between Americans and Cuba.

Madam Speaker, we should follow President Trump's original instinct and allow Americans to do business with Cuba.

We should pass Congressman CRAWFORD's bill to increase the competitiveness of our agricultural exports to Cuba. There is no reason for us to have only a one-eighth market share of Cuba's \$2 billion in annual food imports.

We should finally end U.S. travel restrictions and allow all Americans to travel freely, as they choose, to Cuba. That would serve our values and our national interests, and it is a worthy cause in which Democrats and Republicans can join.

FOR THE PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, I am here today for the people. We want an agreement to continue to keep the government open and working for the people.

We are just 8 days from once again having the possibility of having 800,000 workers, Federal employees—air traffic controllers, Border Patrol agents, Secret Service personnel, and many, many more—being furloughed or forced to work without pay. That is not for the people.

We saw how the 35-day-long government shutdown affected our constituents, our communities. We heard all the stories about the shutdown. We heard stories of cancer patients being forced to choose between treatment or paying their rent. We heard the stories of families, for the first time ever, being forced to turn to food banks and soup kitchens to eat. And the list goes on and on.

Madam Speaker, what we did here was, during the State of the Union Address, President Trump spoke about how we must "reject the politics of revenge, resistance, and retaliation." He needs to heed those words and live up to his promise: "... bridge old divisions, heal old wounds, build new coalitions, forge new solutions, and unlock the extraordinary promise of America's future."

He can take an important step in that direction by letting the conference continue working to keep the government open for the people.

Democrats and Republican leaderships indicate a long-term funding agreement is just within reach. It is so imperative that the conferees be allowed to put pen to paper before rushing to judgment or to fire off another tweet labeling their efforts as a waste of time, as the President has done time and time again. That is why the President would be well served to put down his phone, to stop tweeting, and to leave the negotiations to Congress.

Members on both sides of the aisle agree that another government shutdown would be disastrous for the economy, for the people, and unnecessarily harm tens of millions of Americans in the process.

The President, on Tuesday, said he was ready and willing to turn a new leaf. Madam Speaker, let's turn that new leaf. Let's keep the government open.

Madam Speaker, House Democrats are committed more than ever to keeping the government open and funding and finding commonsense solutions to the issues affecting my constituents and all Americans.

Madam Speaker, it is simple: Democrats are for the people.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 15 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

On this day of the National Prayer Breakfast, we gather as a Nation founded by people of faith. In their wisdom and, we hope, with Your inspiration, our Founders recognized that the power of government ought not be utilized for the advancement of religion, nor validated by religion, but, rather, to guarantee the freedom of citizens to worship as they feel called by God's spirit to do.

From its inception, a predominantly Protestant, colonial population has become a national population of Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Mormons, and countless other congregants, Americans all, who have flourished on this continent, not without trials and tribulations.

We pray together that Your blessing continues upon us all and, most especially, on the Members of this assembly, trusting that, in the depths of our hearts, we are seeking to hear Your call in the following of our consciences.

Bless us this day and every day. May all that is done here be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CONGRESS ON YOUR CORNER CONCERNS

(Mrs. KIRKPATRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, I held a Congress on Your Corner in Tucson, Arizona. I met face-to-face with my constituents at a supermarket. They shared their grave concerns over the President's words and actions.

One woman had never attended an event like this, but she stopped by to tell me she was terrified of losing her health insurance. Another woman was concerned about how inaction on climate change would impact her children.

No one President can solve every issue, but we need a President that unifies and fights for America's future, not divides us by party, economic status, or the country we were born in.

President Trump's address on Tuesday was more of the same. He doubled down on his divisive and destructive agenda with blatant lies. Time and again, he has failed the middle class and misinformed the public from the power pulpit. The President didn't even utter a word about climate change, and he mischaracterized activity at the border.

But I am listening, and I am here to work. I am focused on investing in hardworking families and fighting for people, not corporations. We will have votes on the floor this week that prove our investment in and care for these issues.

WITHDRAWING FROM INF TREATY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, President Donald Trump made the courageous decision to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty last week. This was long overdue. Sadly, there have been obvious Russian violations since 2011.

The 1987 INF Treaty was achieved by President Ronald Reagan to prohibit development of ground-launched cruise missiles. The INF Treaty was seen as the gold standard of arms control agreements for years, but Russia has been in violation of the agreement, while we have continued to limit our research and development.

Allowing Russia to violate the INF Treaty endangers American families. Now, Russia will find more incentive to return to the negotiating table, encouraged by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

We must continue to seek peace through strength. It was this strategy implemented by President Reagan that prompted Moscow to sign the INF Treaty in the first place.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

PAY WORKERS WHAT THEY HAVE EARNED

(Mr. HORSFORD asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about legislation that I introduced to protect Nevadans from the pain of another government shutdown.

Federal employees and contractors shouldn't be on the hook for the fees, interest, and fines that pile up when the government shuts down. That is why yesterday I introduced legislation to ensure these workers don't just receive backpay, but they also get paid back for the late fees and overdue rent notices they receive, through no fault of their own, during any government shutdown.

This bill also requires the Federal Government to reimburse States and Tribes for extra funds that they were forced to spend during shutdowns, ensuring Nevada taxpayers aren't picking up the tab when the Federal Government refuses to do so.

The President made clear on Tuesday night that he is willing to create another self-imposed crisis so that he can get money for a border wall. This bill will ensure that our Federal workers and State and Tribal governments aren't footing the bill for that crisis.

SHOW YOUR WORK
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

(Mr. DAVIDSON of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIDSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Budget Office is supposed to help Congress evaluate the fiscal costs and benefits of legislation. Given the weight these scores have on the ability of Members of Congress to make policy decisions, it should be a top priority that the CBO standards are of the highest possible quality.

CBO should improve and could improve the accuracy of its projections by adopting a transparent process that would allow independent experts to provide technical contributions and verify their conclusions, as is the standard for all academic journals.

That is why I have introduced the CBO Show Your Work Act, which would require the CBO to publish online all nonproprietary data, models, and processes utilized in the analysis and scoring of legislation.

CBO is the internal accountant for every Member of Congress. Therefore, Members of Congress, and the public they serve, should have access to the data, models, and processes that create the numbers we rely on.

RECOGNIZING PAULA MASSEY

(Mr. COX of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Black History Month. This month, as we pay tribute