

which we can hang up the phone or never answer the phone or we can toss the survey into the trash, when the FCC sends someone to your station to ask you questions about how news is developed, it is hard for you to say: I am not going to answer the question, when the FCC has control over your license.

So I am here to make certain that this kind of approach is something that is in the past. I serve on the Appropriations subcommittee that is responsible for the FCC's budget. When they come to tell us about their appropriations request, again I will thank Chairman Wheeler for withdrawing these questions, but I want to make certain there is a genuine concern on behalf of all of us in the Senate—Republicans and Democrats, whatever brand of philosophy you claim to espouse or believe, you ought to be worried when the FCC is making inroads into how news and opinion is formulated at broadcasting stations—television and radio—across the country.

So the speech I had intended to give raising this topic is only given now in part. It is my view that every American citizen has certain civic responsibilities. Not just us Members of the Senate, every American citizen's primary responsibility as a citizen is to make certain we pass on to the next generation of Americans a country in which the freedoms and liberties guaranteed by our Constitution are protected throughout the history of our Nation into the future.

So I ask my colleagues to be ever vigilant as we see an ever encroaching Washington, DC, administration, even Congress, intruding in the lives of the American citizens, particularly as it relates to their opportunities for free speech.

I will be back later in the week to talk about other intrusions by the Federal Government into free speech and political advocacy. But again, Mr. President, thank you for the opportunity to be on the Senate floor today to highlight what I think would have been an egregious violation of the Constitution by one of our Federal agencies.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Without objection, it is so ordered.

---

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—  
S. 1752, S. 1917

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by me, after consultation with Senator McCONNELL, the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 251, S. 1752;

that if a cloture motion is filed on the bill, there be 2 hours of debate on S. 1752 and S. 1917, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate immediately proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate immediately proceed to vote on the passage of the bill; that no amendments, points of order or motions be in order to the bill prior to a vote on passage; that if the motion to invoke cloture on S. 1752 is not agreed to, the bill be returned to the calendar; that upon disposition of S. 1752, the Senate immediately proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 293, S. 1917; that if a cloture motion is filed on the bill, the Senate immediately proceed to the vote on the motion to invoke cloture; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that no amendments, points of order or motions be in order to the bill prior to the vote on passage; that if the motion to invoke cloture on S. 1917 is not agreed to, the bill be returned to the calendar.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, the Gillibrand and McCaskill bills that the majority leader talked about were filed as amendments to the Defense authorization bill that the Senate passed in December of last year. They each have significant bipartisan support.

The majority leader filled the tree on that bill and blocked amendments on both sides of the aisle, and therefore the Senate did not vote on these bills last year. There are hundreds of other amendments that were also blocked.

Would the Senator modify this request to include a vote, at a 60-vote threshold, on another proposal that was blocked from consideration? The Kirk amendment No. 2295 was filed to the Defense bill. It would impose additional sanctions against the government of Iran if it violates the interim agreement with the United States. Will the Senator include a vote on the Kirk amendment as part of this agreement?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the majority leader agree to the modification?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object. There is no more important national security concern today than keeping Iran from getting a nuclear weapons capability. For our own national security and for that of Israel, our ally, we are committed to stopping Iran from getting that capability.

That is why President Obama has entered into international negotiations with Iran. The Senate has a long tradition of bipartisanship on this issue, including numerous strong bipartisan

votes that we put in place to initiate the very sanctions that have brought Iran to the negotiating table.

In summation, I am terribly disappointed that my Republican friends are trying to turn this vital national security concern into a partisan issue by trying to inject it into a setting where it is clearly not relevant.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Is there objection to the original request?

Mr. MORAN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

---

CUBA

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I have come to the floor to speak about my two recent fact-finding trips to Cuba. During the first trip, which was an incredible journey across the nation of Cuba, I had conversations with Cuban citizens, farmers, doctors, nurses, students, a very broad cross section of the Cuban citizenry, also some government officials.

The second trip involved a 1-day visit to the U.S. Detention Center at Guantanamo Bay. I would like to begin with details of my first trip which took place during January's recess in the Senate. First, I wish to publicly thank Ambassador Cabanas, the Cuban—well, I guess since we do not have an embassy—he has the rank of Ambassador, but he is in charge of the Cuban interest section here. I wish to thank him and his staff personally for arranging this and overcoming a lot of difficult obstacles to make sure we could take this trip.

I guess I am the first Senator or Congressman to do this kind of a trip. First, we flew from Miami down to Santiago de Cuba. We spent 2 or 3 days in Santiago de Cuba. Then we drove from Santiago to Holguin, to Camaguey, Santa Clara and into Havana. So we traversed about 700 miles during the week's period we were there, seeing most of the entire nation of Cuba.

I have not seen—I have not been up to the Pinar del Rio out here in the western part. That is one part I have not seen. I had visited as a Senator 11 years before, but that was only in Havana. This time I wanted to see the country. I wanted to see ordinary Cubans in small towns and communities, to get a feel for what it was like in the rest of the country.

Most people just go to Havana. That is akin to going to New York City and saying you have been to America. It is not the same. There is a lot more country to Cuba, a lot more things going on than just Havana.

It is clear to me this is a time that is very important in Cuban-American relations. So I just wanted to share some of the insights I gained during my travels across this Nation of 11 million people.

As I said, I arrived in Santiago on January 17. Over the course of the week, we traveled up through the countryside. Again, I wish to thank Bernardo Toscano, a Cuban who had been in the United States I think three or four times. He had been in Washington two or three times working in their interest section and I think once or twice in New York with their interest section in New York.

So we met him. He came with us to Santiago and then served as a host and was with us all during our trip.

Bernardo—I always say, he is an Italian Cuban, Bernardo Toscano—again, another indication that there are a lot of different nationalities that people in Cuba have.

Bernardo was so gracious, so kind, so informative in taking care of things for us. He informed me that he had been to visit 20 States in the United States. So he has been to 20 States. Yet a U.S. citizen cannot go to Cuba to see Cuba. But the trip we took was fascinating. All along the way, from Santiago all up the way, we saw tour buses—tour buses with people.

They looked like North Americans, but in fact they were from England and Germany and Sweden and Canada, mostly Canada, a lot of Canadians. But there were people traveling, visiting different things. Canada right now, they have a direct flight from Toronto to Santa Clara. Then you get on a bus and go out here, to those wonderful beaches out here, which we did not visit. A lot of Canadians and a lot of Europeans go there but not Americans. I will have more to say about that.

But, again, I wish to thank so many people of Cuba, so many people I saw, for the warm welcome, the hospitality they extended to me, my wife, my traveling companions, and my staff as we traveled throughout their country.

Prior to my election—long before my election to Congress, I was a Navy pilot stationed at Guantanamo Bay for 18 months. So this was interesting to see the rest of Cuba other than just Guantanamo Bay, which is right down here. This is the Guantanamo Bay area. It is right near Santiago de Cuba.

In fact, landing at the airport in Santiago was quite interesting. One of my traveling companions I was with was a Navy pilot with me when I was stationed in Guantanamo. He is Cuban American. We remembered how we were always kind of warned when we were out flying not to get mistaken between Santiago and Guantanamo because the runways look exactly the same.

They are both east-west runways, and they are right there on the ocean. There is a bay on both of them, and if we weren't careful, we might land on one rather than the other.

All that time that we were flying out of there we never went to Santiago—of course, we couldn't—but we used to see it as we patrolled the skies around Cuba. So now landing at Santiago was kind of an interesting flashback in time to when I was a young Navy pilot.

I wanted to get a firsthand look at the lives of ordinary people outside of Havana. Particularly, I have long advocated in this country for a strong public health infrastructure, and I wanted to examine the strengths and weaknesses of Cuba's public health system.

When we first arrived in Santiago, we went to visit the cancer hospital, which provides treatment for people from across the entire country. I found the doctors there and the leaders of that hospital to be very dedicated public servants. The institution has struggled to overcome the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, which hit Santiago very hard. Again, it would be mutually beneficial for both Cuba and the United States if we had better relations and if we had better trade relations with Cuba. They might need some medical equipment that we have, but we could also learn from them on some of the processes and procedures they use in treating cancer patients.

I was struck by one thing. This was Friday afternoon, and we were going through the hospital—yes, they have all the necessary equipment, the radiation machines and all the equipment they need to do radiation, infusion for chemotherapy. They have all of that. As I said, the hospital suffered some damage from Hurricane Sandy and that hasn't been all fixed yet—but what was interesting, as I was going through the hospital, I noticed a lot of empty beds.

As we were leaving the hospital, I said to the director: Where are all of the people? It looks like you have a lot of empty beds.

She said: Oh, it is Friday afternoon. We send them home for the weekend.

I said: Really?

She said a very interesting thing to me.

She said: Yes. You come to the hospital to get cured, but you go home to get well.

I thought about that, because not too long ago I had an instance in Des Moines, IA, where I had visited a friend of mine who was seriously ill with cancer—he has since passed away—but he wanted to leave. Literally, he wanted to leave the hospital for a Sunday meeting of the Methodist Church. He was a Methodist minister and the hospital wouldn't let him leave.

They said: If you leave, then you have to be all readmitted again through Medicare, and Medicare will cut off the payments and all of that.

There was all of this, and they wouldn't even let him leave for a few hours to go halfway across the city to partake in an award he was supposed to receive.

I thought about that when I saw this hospital and she said: No, we send people home for the weekend and then they come back on Monday.

There are interesting things such as that that we pick up. There is a lot the two of us could learn together.

In Camaguey—we stopped in Holguin, which is also kind of a small, rural community, again with a very kind of

comprehensive clinic system. As we drove on up the road to Camaguey, in Camaguey we had an interesting visit. We visited the home of Dr. Carlos Finlay. Now some people might say who is Dr. Carlos Finlay?

Dr. Carlos Finlay was the person who discovered the origin of yellow fever that is transmitted by a certain mosquito. A lot of people didn't believe him. They just did not believe him, but he persevered. Later on it was a person who is sort of famous around here—at least we know the name, Dr. Walter Reed—who, when they were building the Panama Canal, discovered that Dr. Finlay was right, it was a transmission by mosquitoes.

We were able to visit his home and there is again a whole cadre of people there doing research on other transmissions of illnesses; for example, the transmission of different diseases by mosquitoes there, but again there is a heavy focus on medical research.

When we went to Santa Clara, we visited another clinic there. They call them polyclinics. In other words, they do a lot of different things. It is sort of what we might think of in this country as a community health center—it is a community health center. Unlike our community health centers, people don't have to just go there to seek help. The community health centers, the polyclinics, go out there. They go out in very rural areas to make sure kids have their vaccinations and to make sure people have checkups.

One of the reasons they have such a low infant mortality rate—which some have said is lower than ours and is, in fact, one of the lowest in the world, and they have one of the lowest rates of mortality of children zero to 5—is because when a woman gets pregnant in Cuba, she is visited immediately. As soon as they know about it, she gets visited by a nurse; visited by health officials who put her on a better diet, make sure she doesn't smoke, provide supportive services for her during her pregnancy, and make sure there is someone there for the birth. For that child, everything is covered from the earliest time of pregnancy through early childhood.

It is a hands-on approach. It is going out serving people rather than making people come in to them. This is one of the key features of what Cuba has done. They have made the practice of medicine a public service in all aspects. Whether one is a doctor, a surgeon, a nurse or various other health practitioners, it is a public service.

Cuba has put a great deal of emphasis on prevention, prevention of illness. In fact, I must say I was surprised in Cuba that they have gone on an antismoking campaign.

I was out one night in Santiago. We were out to dinner. We came back at about 10 at night, and I noticed a street was blocked off. There were a lot of people out there, and I asked Mr. Toscano what that was.

He asked somebody else and said: Well, in Santiago every Friday and

Saturday night they block off long streets and they have festivals, street parties.

I said: I want to go there.

So we parked our car and we walked out. We didn't have any guards or anybody around us. We just walked down the street. It was a mile long. It was a long street. Late at night, we went down the street, and along the sides of the street there were people cooking foods. There were little kiosks. We even saw one whole hog on a spit being turned, people eating. There were families with kids out there and a lot of young people.

There were a lot of young people out there looking for other young people on Saturday night. There was music. Every other block had some music, and it was just kind of a wonderful atmosphere.

I noticed two things that I was looking for during my walk down and back—how many people were smoking. I counted four people were smoking. There were thousands of people up and down these streets, and I counted four people who were smoking. There may have been more, but that is all I could find.

During this entire walk, with all of these people out in the street, 10:30 at night, Saturday night, I saw one policeman, and he didn't have any firearms. He just had a stick. He just kind of walked around with a stick. There was this wonderful thing, but the idea that no one was smoking, kind of fascinated me.

But I digress. I want to talk about the community-based health system and keeping people healthy. What they have said is it is not just the doctors' offices—that is only one component of keeping people healthy—it is the entire community, the schools, the community-based approach that keeps people healthy. That is something we could learn from and do in this country.

During my visit with health care professionals, they explained that in the early 1980s Cuba moved to a comprehensive family practice model throughout the country, with doctors, nurses, and other health professionals working in teams integrated into the neighborhoods where they live and they work. This has become the pillar of primary health care in Cuba and obviously has contributed to significant improvements in health outcomes. I think their longevity, lifespan, is now even longer than ours in the United States.

These changes and others have helped Cuba improve its health care system. There are several indicators of this. For instance, by the end of 2013, Cuba reported that its infant mortality rate had declined to 4.2 for 1,000 live births, the lowest in its history and one of the lowest in the world. By comparison, the United States had an infant mortality rate of 5.9 per 1,000 live births.

Also, over the past couple of decades, Cuba has increased the number of med-

ical personnel it sends abroad to serve on medical missions, filling critical needs in underserved countries. There are currently nearly 44,000 Cuban medical personnel working in many countries around the world.

Last year I took a trip to Namibia and South Africa, and I saw Cuban doctors working there—actually, sometimes alongside our own doctors from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Interesting. We can work with them there, but we can't work with them here—so they do. They have sent them all over the world.

Also, in Havana I visited a very interesting place I had never heard about. It is called the Latin American School of Medicine. The Latin American School of Medicine is about 20 miles west of Havana. It was an old naval academy. Evidently, President Castro decided they didn't need a naval academy, so they closed it down and made it a medical school. Students come from not only all over Latin America but all around the world to go to medical school.

Believe it or not, there are students from America going to school in Havana—going to medical school. This blew my mind. I never heard of such a thing.

This is what I found out. In the year 2000, the Congressional Black Caucus had a trip to Havana. During that trip they met with President Castro. One of the Congressmen, BENNIE THOMPSON from Mississippi, had said something about how difficult it was for them to get people in certain areas of Mississippi. He said there were large areas in his home district that didn't have a single physician. Also, they talked about how expensive it was to go to medical school.

So President Castro invited American students to come there, and they worked it out. I think the first class started, if I am not mistaken, in 2002. I believe that was the first class. Now, believe it or not, there are 108 U.S. students going to this school.

I didn't see them all because a lot of them, during their schooling, go out and work in hospitals, clinics, and different things such as that. I met with six of them and it was very interesting. From the left is Michael, who was from California; Nikolai from Queens in New York; Kimberly, also from northern California; Ariel was from Michigan; Olive is from Wisconsin; and Sarah is from New Mexico.

All of them are first-year students except for Sarah, who is a third-year student, watches over them, and is their tutor or their leader.

There are requirements before you go there. They have to be from an extremely low-income family and cannot afford to go to medical school. They have to be a college graduate and graduated with one of the sciences, such as biology or one of the physical sciences, something like that. So they must have graduated from college. Third, they have to agree that when they

graduate they are going to come back to America and work in an underserved area.

Here is the deal: Every one of these students is going to medical school. Do you know what it costs them? Zero. Not one cent. The 108 students pay nothing. We have over 90 graduates of this school back here in America right now.

And that is another thing: Whenever we traveled over to Cuba, I went to the clinics and I talked to health people. I always asked them: What did it cost you to go to school? Do you have student debt? No. Medical school is free. There is no cost to going to medical school—none whatsoever. So here are these students, who would never be able to go to medical school and absorb that cost, getting a free medical education. So again, here is another of the things we could be working with Cuba on if we had a little better policy with Cuba.

The six students I met with are happy and grateful to have the opportunity. They were just out of their first 6 months. For the first 6 months all they do is learn Spanish—Spanish immersion. They had just finished that and they were very happy about that, and that now they would actually start studying medicine. Again, so many different things, but mainly I focused on health care and what they were doing on health care.

I also met with Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez. I had a long lunch with him, their former Ambassador to the United Nations and now their Foreign Minister. We had a long discussion about our relationship with Cuba.

He himself said it is time we have a new relationship with the United States. It is time for a new course. We can't be bound by old history. We need to make new history. I think that is what I would like to echo here; that we do have a constructive new policy between Cuba and America.

The last thing I did was to pay a visit to Mr. Alan Gross. Right here, Mr. Alan Gross. This is my staff member, Rosemary Gutierrez, who went with us on this trip and made sure what I was hearing was correct in terms of Spanish, since I don't speak Spanish fluently. Mr. Gross, as you know, has been in prison now for over 4 years. I am hopeful he will be released soon on humanitarian grounds. I will be working with our government to engage with the Cuban Government in serious and sustained talks to resolve his situation and other related issues.

I might add what we are holding in this photo is a little chain. What he does in his spare time is he puts things together out of bottle caps, plastic bottle caps. He is now serving a 15-year prison sentence. I spent well over an hour with him. I think he is holding up pretty well, under the circumstances. Obviously, he is not very happy. Who would be happy, being locked up like that? He is confined to his room for 23 hours of the day, but he is allowed outside. He told me he walks 10,000 steps a

day and does 50 pullups for an hour each day. So he makes these bracelets out of the rings from the water bottles. He also reads and watches television. He says he has television and things to read.

I know other Senators have visited with him in Havana, but it is time to bring Mr. Gross home. It is time to end this. It is time we do some dealing with the Cuban Government on his issue and on some other related issues that I don't mean to go into right now but the administration knows of which I speak. There is no reason why we can't return Mr. Gross to this country this year, and I am hopeful that will be done.

It is time to recognize that Cuba is our neighbor; that it is not only our neighbor but it is a sovereign nation and we have to work to improve on this relationship with a country 90 miles from our shore. It is obvious to visitors, the Cuban people and the American people have a great deal in common. In all my travels through Cuba, as we stopped at various places—stopped to have refreshments here and there, stopped in small communities—I noticed that every small town we went through or by had a baseball diamond or maybe two baseball diamonds. It is amazing how many people play baseball in Cuba. They have town teams, and towns will have two teams, one section of town against the other section—kids all playing baseball. Wouldn't it be great if we had some kind of relationship where some of our small baseball teams in the United States could go to Cuba and play? We know they have some pretty good players because some have come here to play in our Major Leagues.

In every place I stopped, and with all the people we talked to, I never heard one Cuban—not one—ever say a bad thing about the United States of America or about the American people. I never heard it. I expected some would say: You know, you are doing bad things to Cuba with your embargo and we don't like Americans for this. I expected to hear that. I never heard it. Do you know the thing I heard most often from ordinary Cubans? Where are you from? I said: I am from Iowa and I work in Washington, DC. The usual response was: Oh. Do you know my cousin so-and-so, who lives in St. Louis or my cousin so-and-so who lives here or there? It seems as though every Cuban has a cousin in America someplace. One woman said her son lives in Michigan.

There is this sense we have a lot in common, and I never felt any animosity whatsoever. It is clear we have a lot in common. We are both nations of hard-working people who want access to basic health care and a good education for our kids.

That is another thing: I didn't spend a lot of time looking at education, but it was clear to me the literacy rate in Cuba is very high. Some have said it is the highest of all the Latin American

countries. I can't attest to that. But it is clear that education is a very important part of the Cuban structure.

Over the years, I have met with many Iowans, business people, diplomats who want to improve our relationship with Cuba to facilitate more trade and travel with our neighbors. Even with the limited opening with Cuba's markets, we have seen tremendous benefits from agricultural exports to Cuba from my State of Iowa and other parts of the United States. It is only our official policy that stands in the way of much greater exports of U.S. commodities and food products plus related agricultural machinery, technology, and so forth.

Here is another thing I noticed: We went through a lot of farms and we saw a lot of agriculture—mostly sugarcane, but other things too—a lot of cattle. This whole section of Cuba here, in this area of the map, is almost all cattle; livestock—goats and cattle—and other agriculture. I want to say this: This is the first and only country I have ever visited where I went out to see agricultural entities and have never seen a John Deere tractor or a John Deere implement of any kind. I can go to China. I went almost to the Tibetan border in China and saw John Deere equipment. There is John Deere equipment in Africa, John Deere equipment in Pakistan, and India. If we had better trade, I might see some more John Deere implements down in Cuba, which would be great for their productivity.

We would also benefit from a two-way trade. There are many things grown in Cuba we have appetites for, such as fruits and vegetables—fresh fruits that consumers in our country would enjoy.

Again, I think Americans really do want to change our policy. I have here the Atlantic Council. On February 11 they released the results of their latest poll which found that 56 percent of the American people support the normalization of relations with Cuba, including 63 percent of Floridians who want to normalize relations with Cuba. I think we have had a policy of isolation for far too long. As this latest poll indicates, the American people think so too. After being in place for over 50 years, this embargo has not been effective in any way. Our policy has benefited neither the Cuban people nor the American people.

Both the United States and Cuba have recently taken steps to allow for greater travel. It is a significant step forward. The Cuban Government has eliminated its long-standing policy of requiring an exit permit and a letter of invitation for Cubans to travel abroad. This change in policy has allowed for prominent dissidents and human rights activists to travel abroad from Cuba.

Additionally, restrictions on remittances have been lifted. I think remittances now from Cuban-Americans and their families are now their second largest export or second to sugar.

The United States and Cuba have resumed low-level talks on migration,

search and rescue operations, and other issues. I might mention one other. When I was in Guantanamo a week or so ago, with a group led by Senator TESTER, Captain Nettleton, who is the base commander, took me around the base. I had been stationed there, as I said, about 53 years ago, so I kind of wanted to see some of the old places. As he was driving me around, he took me up to the gate, and coming back I said: Do you ever have contact with Cubans? He said: Oh yes, we do. In fact, 2 years ago the last of the Cubans retired from working at Guantanamo. They lived in Cuba but worked on Guantanamo just until 2 years ago.

He told me that recently he went to visit the hospital in Guantanamo City. Now that is not on the map but it is right outside of Guantanamo Bay, our naval base. He went to visit the hospital there because they have a burn unit. They do not have a burn unit on Guantanamo at our facility. So they have made a handshake deal and an agreement that if we have burn victims on Guantanamo, we can take them to the hospital in Guantanamo City. Things like that are happening and are kind of opening the door, so we should build on these small but positive changes in the relationship.

The United States should abandon its policy of seeking Cuba's isolation. We should lift all restrictions on travel to Cuba. What is our justification for denying Americans the right to travel to Cuba? We should allow for all U.S. citizens wishing to go to Cuba to do so. This would expose more Cubans to our young people, our ideas and interactions.

When you go to Cuba you see a lot of Canadians, a lot of Europeans, and now Cuban-Americans can go to Cuba freely. If you are Cuban-American you can get on one of about four to seven daily flights from Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Key West to Cuba. If you are a U.S. citizen you can't get on one of those unless you have a permit from the U.S. Government. If you are a Cuban-American, you can get on the plane and go to Cuba and come back, and more and more are doing so. As of last year, I believe Americans are now the second largest group to visit Cuba, but they are all Cuban-Americans. We have this crazy policy. If you are Cuban-American you can go to Cuba, but if you are not, you can't. Someone please explain that one to me.

It is time for us to chart a new course. Our relationship is frozen in a Cold War mentality that has not achieved its goals and made it difficult to move forward on issues that encourage more trade and travel between our two countries. Our policy also fails to promote more openness and respect for internationally recognized human rights.

Multiple layers of sanctions remain in place, making it difficult for U.S. businesses to trade with Cuba. Both the Cuban people and U.S. national interests would benefit from a modernized and sensible policy. Now is not the

time to be bound and held back by history. It is time to make new history. It is time to begin a new chapter in the relations of our two countries.

I hope the Obama administration and the Cuban Government will seize this opportunity to do just that—to modernize, to move ahead, recognizing always and foremost that Cuba is a sovereign nation. They will not be dominated by America or any other country. We have to deal with them just as we do any other sovereign nation.

#### GUANTANAMO

I will conclude by saying I had an opportunity on a trip with Senator TESTER and two other Senators to visit the Guantanamo Bay detention center. We toured Camps 5 and 6, which house the majority of the detainees held at Guantanamo. We also had a tour of the facilities that hold high-value detainees, including Khalid Shaikh Mohammed.

Based on my own observations on my tour of Guantanamo and reports I read about previous conditions, it does appear that detainees are being treated more humanely now than previously and that conditions at Guantanamo are in line with how the detainees would be treated if they were held in the United States.

However, this trip reinforced my long-held conviction that the detention facility at Guantanamo should be closed as soon as possible. Its very existence—remote, offshore, not subject to the laws of the United States—makes it impossible to justify its existence. That is why I introduced a bill to close the facility as far back as 2007. That is why I continue to believe Federal courts and Federal prisons are fully capable of dealing with these detainees.

The indefinite detention of hundreds of individuals—some for over 13 years at this point—has harmed our image abroad, complicated relations with friendly countries, and I think really violates the basic principles of our Constitution. It is not acceptable. And the existence of this facility cannot be justified when there is an alternative—and there is.

I am not alone in advocating for this prison's closure. Military and foreign policy officials across the political spectrum have made it clear that we must close the detention center at Guantanamo. Leaders including Colin Powell, Henry Kissinger, James Baker, Madeline Albright, Warren Christopher, Robert Gates, David Petraeus, and CIA Director John Brennan have all said closing the detention center at Guantanamo is critical to our national security.

Yet I have no illusions regarding these detainees. Some are extremely dangerous terrorists with the determination and the ability, if given the opportunity, to inflict great harm on the United States and its citizens. But, indeed, prisons in the United States are already holding many of the world's most dangerous terrorists—criminals

who have been found guilty in a court of law. These include Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing; Zacarias Moussaoui, the 9/11 coconspirator; and Richard Reid, the Shoe Bomber. If we can successfully try these terrorists in courts and hold them in our prisons, we can do the same with the Guantanamo detainees.

In closing, I think it is long past due that we reexamine our policy toward Cuba. I call upon the Obama administration to not waste any more time. Get to it. Let's change our policy. Let's start making new history and not be detained by the old history. Secondly, it is time that we close the prison in Guantanamo.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

WILLIE F. JOHNSON

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, as I have every year since I came to the Senate now 8 years ago, I rise today to commemorate Black History Month by paying tribute to a distinguished American. This year we are privileged to recognize Willie F. Johnson, a man who has enriched both the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and our Nation through civic engagement and successful entrepreneurial endeavors.

Willie Johnson's contributions both as a citizen and as the founder and chairman of PRWT Services, Inc.—one of the oldest and most significant minority-owned businesses in the United States—are a credit to both him and to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Today I am proud to share some of Willie's achievements and the examples he and PRWT have set of responsible corporate citizenship. PRWT does it all. It employs over 1,500 people, makes money for its shareholders, and still manages to give back to its community and its other stakeholders to an extent that few other for-profit companies ever achieve.

Throughout his career, Willie Johnson has remained committed to his roots in social services and has never lost sight of the importance of the social and community impact of his work. Willie Johnson's professional life stands as a testament to his values.

After graduating from Allen University in South Carolina with a degree in sociology, he earned a master's of social work from the University of Pennsylvania while serving as a house parent for the Philadelphia Development Center, a residential facility for young offenders. Willie pursued a long career in social services after graduating, working for 18 years as the regional commissioner of the Office of Social Services in the southeastern region of Pennsylvania, director of Youth Services Coordinating Office for the city of Pennsylvania, and finally as executive director of the Office of Employment and Training under the Office of the

Mayor of Philadelphia. So he has served both our Commonwealth and the city of Philadelphia in that work.

After years of serving the people of Philadelphia as a social administrator, Willie's commitment to job creation led him to consider whether he might be better able to benefit his community as an entrepreneur. So in 1983 he worked with partners to found Fidelity Systems, a cable/line construction company that hired and trained local residents to lay cable and work in equipment warehouses. Through this work, Willie became acquainted with the president of the Lockheed Martin company, who was interested in using technology to help State and local governments manage their businesses.

In August of 1988 Willie joined with Paul Dandridge, Raymond A. Saulino, and William Turner to establish PRWT Services, Inc., which we now know by the acronym PRWT. PRWT received its first contract in its first year, providing parking services for the city of Philadelphia. The company would go on to secure a significant contract from Lockheed Martin, providing customer service and back-office staff to support Lockheed's technology, drawing on the workforce management expertise of Willie Johnson and his partners to better manage these resources.

Over the years, PRWT expanded to provide business process outsourcing services for a variety of industries as well as serve many State and municipal governments nationwide. During Willie Johnson's two-decade tenure as CEO, PRWT grew to employ more than 1,500 workers in eight States and the District of Columbia.

In 2001 PRWT acquired U.S. Facilities, Inc. That acquisition marked one of the first purchases of a publicly traded company by a minority-run business.

In 2008 a PRWT subsidiary became the first minority-owned manufacturer of pharmaceutical ingredients in the United States of America.

In 2008, after experiencing a 120-percent increase in revenues, PRWT made the decision to become a publicly traded and owned company. Mindful of their significant role as a successful minority-owned business, Willie and his partners made their first public offering while maintaining majority shares to ensure that the company remained minority owned and run. Willie remains chairman of PRWT's board of directors, which has maintained its leadership and minority-owned status throughout the process of diversifying.

As PRWT has expanded, Willie and his partners have maintained a focus on the community impact of their work. PRWT is generous with charitable contributions and investments and encourages its employees to volunteer and remain engaged in their communities. Willie has been just as engaged and committed to service outside of his work with PRWT. He serves on the boards of a number of national and Pennsylvania-based organizations,