



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2019

No. 24

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MURPHY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 7, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEPHANIE N. MURPHY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

BIGOTRY AND POLICY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, and still I rise. I rise today, Madam Speaker, to take a stand for liberty and justice for all against bigotry and hatred.

I rise to call to our attention, Madam Speaker, that the refusal to resign because of blatant bigotry is a symptom, the refusal to resign when it is obvious, intuitively obvious to the most casual

observer, that there is the bigotry. The refusal to resign when there is clear and convincing evidence of bigotry, when there is guilt beyond all doubt, when there is a smoking gun, the refusal to resign under these circumstances is a symptom.

The problem is at the Presidential level. It is the refusal to take on a President who has exhibited bigotry in policy. When we allow bigotry in policy to proceed with immunity, we allow persons to believe that they, too, can emulate that which comes from the highest office in the land.

Madam Speaker, this level of bigotry in policy cannot be tolerated. You have, in Virginia, a Klansman and blackface next to each other in a yearbook. It has been acknowledged as that of the Governor.

With that acknowledgment and with that additional indication that it was done on a previous occasion, blackface, there is enough evidence not only to ask that the Governor resign, but to demand that he do so.

But I understand why this level of bigotry is going to be tolerated to a certain extent, because we don't want to take on the President. If we allow the President to exist with his bigotry, how can we demand with any degree of credibility that the Governor resign?

We have to start at the top. This level of bigotry is trickling down to this extent that people are going to refuse to acknowledge their bigotry. They will lie and deny. They will do all that they can to stay in office.

We have to take a stand, and I stand today to say that we cannot allow this incident to go unchecked. Because what will we do next when there is a Nazi standing in a photograph and there is a noose in a photograph, there are swastikas?

This is going to continue. It doesn't end with Virginia. This is but one symptom, and we have to do what we have always done.

It has been our policy when this level of bigotry surfaces, when it shows its ugly head, we take it on. There is a means by which we can deal with bigotry in policy, but if we allow political expediency—the belief that we ought to defeat a bigoted President—to trump the moral imperative to remove him from office, the moral imperative to impeach bigotry emanating in policy from the Presidency, we have a moral imperative to do so, and we can do so.

There is a committee that can convene to deal with bigotry emanating from the Presidency creating the symptoms that we see in others who refuse to leave office after their bigotry has been revealed. There is a committee that we can convene. That committee is called the Congress of the United States.

Any one Member of Congress can call to the attention of this august body that such thing has happened; and when it is called to this body's attention, we can take a vote, we can go on record.

Are we going to allow bigotry to emanate from the Presidency or will we go on record? I say we go on record.

I am one Member of Congress who, after 400 years of bigotry and hatred and slavery and all of these other ugly features and evidence of harm to society—forgive me for getting so wrapped up in it, but I have to say it. After all of this, for 400 years, it is time for Congress to take this vote.

We have had 400 years to deal with it, and we haven't. What better way to deal with bigotry in this country than to say to the world: We will extricate a President from office for his bigotry?

There will be a vote on impeachment, regardless of what the Mueller commission says.

Bigotry in policy will not be tolerated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H1395

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.