

George Floyd? To bring our Nation together? No, I don't think so. The purpose was to erase from history—erase every person and name and event not righteous enough—and to cast those who would object as defenders of the cause of slavery, to reenact in our current politics that Civil War that tore brother from brother and divided this Nation against itself.

You would think, the way some in the media talk about this country, that they are sad we are still not fighting the Civil War. They would like us to fight a new civil war in our culture day and night, without end.

I would suggest to my colleagues that the Civil War not only gave us villains, it also gave us heroes and a more perfect union to love. Maybe we should learn from those heroes.

We should learn from Lincoln, who called our Nation to unity at Gettysburg. "It is for the living," he told us, "to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

If you visit Gettysburg, you will find monuments to the dead of free States and slave States alike, and you will see children who are brought there by their parents after long car drives from their homes, drawn in by these old symbols and memorials to the lessons those teach about our Nation's new birth of freedom.

The Americans who visit these hallowed grounds all across our country want to know why this Nation fought a war against itself, why brothers could not live under one flag together. We teach them there in those places how we became a better nation through the crucible of that terrible war, and we teach them there to be proud that we did so.

That hard-fought pride in the shared struggle that unites us is now fading. That story is being erased. A nation united in the cause of justice is dividing, and we are increasingly at war with ourselves. This cannot continue. This great Nation and its good people cannot continue our life of freedom together if we vilify and destroy each other from within.

Now, before we vote on this floor on the National Defense Authorization Act, I will offer an amendment to undo this effort at historical revisionism. I will offer it not to celebrate the cause of the Confederacy but to embrace the cause of union—our union, shared together as Americans.

It is time for our leaders to stop using their position here to divide us.

Let us work together instead to build on the history and the responsibility that we share as Americans to continue that unfinished work of this Nation that we call home.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I just want to make sure that people understand we are tracking a 1 a.m. vote before I get into some of these bills. Again, we are tracking a 1 a.m. vote.

CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF CUBAN DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST JOSE DANIEL FERRER AND COMMENDING THE EFFORTS OF JOSE DANIEL FERRER TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN CUBA

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 467, S. Res. 454.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 454) calling for the immediate release of Cuban democracy activist Jose Daniel Ferrer and commending the efforts of Jose Daniel Ferrer to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations with an amendment to strike all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic and with an amendment to the preamble to strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

Whereas José Daniel Ferrer García is a Cuban democracy and human rights activist who has dedicated his life to promoting greater political pluralism and respect for fundamental freedoms in Cuba;

Whereas Mr. Ferrer was born in Cuba on July 29, 1970, in the province of Santiago de Cuba;

Whereas, in the late 1990s, Mr. Ferrer joined the Christian Liberation Movement (MCL), a peaceful political movement led by late Cuban activist Oswaldo Paya;

Whereas, through coordination with the MCL, Mr. Ferrer helped lead the Varela Project, an initiative to collect the signatures of citizens to petition the Government of Cuba for democratic reforms and protections for freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly;

Whereas, in March 2003, as part of a series of sweeping arrests of 75 democracy activists, Mr. Ferrer was arrested by Cuban authorities for his work on the Varela Project and sentenced to 25 years in prison;

Whereas, in March 2004, Amnesty International declared the group of 75 democracy activists, including Mr. Ferrer, to be prisoners of conscience and called for their immediate and unconditional release;

Whereas, in 2009, Mr. Ferrer was honored with the Democracy Award given annually by the National Endowment for Democracy;

Whereas, in March 2011, as part of an agreement brokered by the Catholic Church, Mr. Ferrer refused to abandon his homeland and was released from prison to remain in Cuba;

Whereas, in August 2011, Mr. Ferrer founded the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU), a non-violent political movement dedicated to promoting human rights, democratic principles, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba;

Whereas, on June 7, 2012, Mr. Ferrer testified via digital video conference at a hearing of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

Whereas, since he was released from jail in March 2011, Mr. Ferrer has been frequently harassed, regularly surveilled, and repeatedly jailed by Cuban authorities for his role in UNPACU;

Whereas, on October 1, 2019, Mr. Ferrer was imprisoned arbitrarily by Cuban authorities for his leadership of UNPACU and outspoken advocacy for human rights and democratic principles in Cuba;

Whereas, on October 1, 2019, Cuban authorities detained 3 other members of UNPACU, Fernando González Vailant, José Pupo Chaveco, and Roilan Zarraga Ferrer;

Whereas the family of Mr. Ferrer was permitted to visit him only twice while he was imprisoned arbitrarily, and the wife of Mr. Ferrer reported that she saw evidence that he had been physically abused and mistreated;

Whereas, on April 3, 2020, Mr. Ferrer was arbitrarily convicted and sentenced to 4 years and 6 months of house arrest for the purported crimes of "injuries" and "privation of liberty";

Whereas, on April 3, 2020, Mr. González Vailant, Mr. Pupo Chaveco, and Mr. Zarraga Ferrer were also arbitrarily convicted to multiyear sentences of house arrest; and

Whereas, since he was placed under house arrest, Mr. Ferrer has informed international media outlets that during his time in prison he was subjected to "torture" and "constant humiliation", and denied access to food and medical treatment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

That the Senate—

(1) condemns the arbitrary conviction, sentencing, and imprisonment of leading Cuban democracy and human rights activist José Daniel Ferrer and calls for his immediate and unconditional release;

(2) calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all members of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU) that have been arbitrarily imprisoned;

(3) commends Mr. Ferrer for his unwavering commitment to advance democratic principles, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba; and

(4) recognizes the important contributions of UNPACU and all of its members for their efforts to promote greater respect for democratic principles, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment to the resolution be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 454), as amended, was agreed to.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution, as amended, and the preamble, as amended, reads as follows:

S. RES. 454

Whereas José Daniel Ferrer García is a Cuban democracy and human rights activist who has dedicated his life to promoting greater political pluralism and respect for fundamental freedoms in Cuba;

Whereas Mr. Ferrer was born in Cuba on July 29, 1970, in the province of Santiago de Cuba;

Whereas, in the late 1990s, Mr. Ferrer joined the Christian Liberation Movement (MCL), a peaceful political movement led by late Cuban activist Oswaldo Paya;

Whereas, through coordination with the MCL, Mr. Ferrer helped lead the Varela Project, an initiative to collect the signatures of citizens to petition the Government of Cuba for democratic reforms and protections for freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly;

Whereas, in March 2003, as part of a series of sweeping arrests of 75 democracy activists, Mr. Ferrer was arrested by Cuban authorities for his work on the Varela Project and sentenced to 25 years in prison;

Whereas, in March 2004, Amnesty International declared the group of 75 democracy activists, including Mr. Ferrer, to be prisoners of conscience and called for their immediate and unconditional release;

Whereas, in 2009, Mr. Ferrer was honored with the Democracy Award given annually by the National Endowment for Democracy;

Whereas, in March 2011, as part of an agreement brokered by the Catholic Church, Mr. Ferrer refused to abandon his homeland and was released from prison to remain in Cuba;

Whereas, in August 2011, Mr. Ferrer founded the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU), a nonviolent political movement dedicated to promoting human rights, democratic principles, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba;

Whereas, on June 7, 2012, Mr. Ferrer testified via digital video conference at a hearing of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;

Whereas, since he was released from jail in March 2011, Mr. Ferrer has been frequently harassed, regularly surveilled, and repeatedly jailed by Cuban authorities for his role in UNPACU;

Whereas, on October 1, 2019, Mr. Ferrer was imprisoned arbitrarily by Cuban authorities for his leadership of UNPACU and outspoken advocacy for human rights and democratic principles in Cuba;

Whereas, on October 1, 2019, Cuban authorities detained 3 other members of UNPACU, Fernando González Vailant, José Pupo Chaveco, and Roilan Zarraga Ferrer;

Whereas the family of Mr. Ferrer was permitted to visit him only twice while he was imprisoned arbitrarily, and the wife of Mr. Ferrer reported that she saw evidence that he had been physically abused and mistreated;

Whereas, on April 3, 2020, Mr. Ferrer was arbitrarily convicted and sentenced to 4 years and 6 months of house arrest for the purported crimes of "injuries" and "privation of liberty";

Whereas, on April 3, 2020, Mr. González Vailant, Mr. Pupo Chaveco, and Mr. Zarraga Ferrer were also arbitrarily convicted to multiyear sentences of house arrest; and

Whereas, since he was placed under house arrest, Mr. Ferrer has informed international media outlets that during his time in prison he was subjected to "torture" and "constant humiliation", and denied access to food and medical treatment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the arbitrary conviction, sentencing, and imprisonment of leading Cuban democracy and human rights activist José Daniel Ferrer and calls for his immediate and unconditional release;

(2) calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all members of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU) that have been arbitrarily imprisoned;

(3) commends Mr. Ferrer for his unwavering commitment to advance democratic principles, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba; and

(4) recognizes the important contributions of UNPACU and all of its members for their efforts to promote greater respect for democratic principles, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba.

RECOGNIZING THE 199TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF GREECE AND CELEBRATING DEMOCRACY IN GREECE AND THE UNITED STATES

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 470, S. Res. 523.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 523) recognizing the 199th anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; the preamble be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 523) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 27, 2020, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

COMMENDING CAREER PROFESSIONALS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR THEIR EXTENSIVE EFFORTS TO REPATRIATE UNITED STATES CITIZENS AND LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 474, S. Res. 567.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 567) commending career professionals at the Department of State for their extensive efforts to repatriate United States citizens and legal permanent residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; the preamble be agreed

to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 567) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of May 7, 2020, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess subject to the call of the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:21 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 7:59 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ALEXANDER).

TAXPAYER FIRST ACT OF 2019— Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise today because I am concerned about the Great American Outdoors Act in its current form. It spends billions on places where Americans vacation but absolutely nothing protecting the areas where 42 percent of Americans live, which are the parishes and counties on coastlines. Of course these parishes and counties are in coastal States, and 85 percent of Americans live in coastal States.

To repeat, the Great American Outdoors Act mandates spending billions on the outdoors where Americans vacation but does absolutely nothing to protect the outdoors where Americans live.

Tonight, I will speak to why that is a problem for coastal States like my State of Louisiana and how one amendment, the coastal amendment, addresses this disparity.

These are uncertain times. Coronavirus continues to kill. Our country struggles to confront and address the issues raised by the George Floyd killing. Hindsight is 20/20, but we wish that we had stockpiled more personal protective equipment. We wish Minneapolis had instituted police reforms. If wise action had addressed these issues before, then these issues might be better now.

It highlights the need for wise public policy—looking beyond the immediate and thinking about that which may occur. On the other hand, there are some things that occur that we know are going to happen because they happened before, so 20/20 hindsight is not needed. Coastal flooding is an example. Hurricanes happen regularly. Sea levels are rising. There will be more coastal flooding, more pictures of families on life rafts, the Cajun Navy in small boats doing rescues, the Coast Guard