

Rep. Driskell offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 19.

A resolution to urge the Congress of the United States to normalize relations with the Cuban government and lift the current embargo and other trade barriers with the Republic of Cuba.

Whereas, For more than five decades, the United States has maintained, through the most comprehensive set of economic sanctions levied against any nation, a strict embargo with the Republic of Cuba. Through various federal acts, regulations, and presidential orders, like the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996* and *Trade Sanction Reform and Export Act of 2000* (TSRA), the embargo places significant restrictions and prohibitions on American-Cuban relationships, notably on trade, travel, and financial transactions; and

Whereas, U.S. laws and regulations make American exports to Cuba difficult and burdensome, when not outright prohibited. Under provisions from the TSRA and export regulations from the Department of Commerce, U.S. food and agricultural entities are legally permitted to export to the island nation, but doing so requires prior permission from the Department of Commerce and compliance with numerous federal export regulations. Despite the ability to legally export, financial restrictions limit the ability of American entities to competitively serve the market, allowing international competitors—competitors from democratic nations like Canada, Brazil, Argentina, and the European Union not burdened with these restrictions—to capitalize off potential U.S. market share; and

Whereas, Relaxing restrictions and prohibitions on U.S. exports to Cuba will present new opportunities to grow our nation's agricultural sector and create jobs in rural communities across the U.S. Moreover, improved trade with Cuba will help continue the tremendous momentum of U.S. agricultural exports, which topped \$152 billion in fiscal year 2014, setting a new record, and provide needed relief to our overall import-export deficit; and

Whereas, The Republic of Cuba, home to more than 11 million consumers in close proximity to the U.S., is a logical target for expanded U.S. food and agricultural exports. Normalizing trade relations between the U.S. and Cuba will enhance Cuban citizens' access to affordable food while providing the U.S. farm and business community with new market access opportunities. Normalized trade will drive growth in both countries and allow U.S. farmers, ranchers, and food companies to efficiently contribute to the food security needs of the Cuban citizenry; and

Whereas, Ending the American embargo against Cuba will boost the Cuban economy and lead to an improved quality of life for the Cuban people. Through Congressional action, breaking down the barriers between Americans and Cubans will expand diplomatic relations, travel, partnerships, and trade, allowing all citizens the opportunity to discover and reconnect on mutual interests, benefiting Cubans and Americans alike; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the Congress of the United States to normalize relations with the Cuban government and lift the current embargo and other trade barriers with the Republic of Cuba; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.