

Rep. Elder offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 137.

A resolution to urge the Congress of the United States to normalize trade relations with the Republic of Cuba by dissolving the current U.S. trade embargo and other trade barriers that have been levied against the island nation.

Whereas, For more than five decades, the United States has maintained a strict embargo against the Republic of Cuba through the most comprehensive set of economic sanctions levied against any nation. Through various laws, regulations, and presidential orders, the U.S. government has placed significant restrictions and prohibitions on American-Cuban relationships, particularly in trade, travel, and financial transactions; and

Whereas, American exports to Cuba are difficult and burdensome when not outright prohibited. Because of federal laws like the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996* and *Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000* (TSRA) and other federal regulations, American food and agricultural entities are legally permitted to export to Cuba but doing so requires prior permission and compliance with a network of federal export regulations. American financial restrictions also limit the ability of American businesses to competitively serve the Cuban marketplace; and

Whereas, Access to the Cuban market would be beneficial and lead to greater market share for American industries. The Republic of Cuba is home to more than 11 million consumers. The close proximity of the United States makes Cuba a logical target for expanded U.S. trade and agricultural products. The Republic of Cuba imported \$2 billion in agricultural products that feed the Cuban people in 2015, but only \$149 million was imported from the United States. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that American exports to Cuba would rise to \$1.8 billion annually if the embargo is dissolved, and improved access to U.S. producers would provide Cubans with cheaper and more plentiful food options; and

Whereas, Michigan's agricultural sector would benefit from greater access to Cuban consumers. Agriculture is one of the leading industries in our state, and access to the Cuban market means new opportunities for Michigan growers to export dry beans, dairy products, fresh fruit, and other in-demand commodities and food products to Cuban consumers. The United States already exports 23,853 tons of dry beans to the Dominican Republic, and open trade with Cuba is expected to produce similar U.S. exports to Cuban markets; and

Whereas, It is time to end the more than half-century long trade embargo against the Republic of Cuba. The relaxing of regulations and prohibitions on American exports and financial services will boost the economies in both countries and allow American farmers, ranchers, and food companies to efficiently contribute to the food security needs of the Cuban citizenry. Through congressional action, the dissolution of trade barriers can expand diplomatic relations between the American and Cuban governments, allow freer travel, partnerships, and trade, and provide an opportunity for all citizens to discover and connect with new cultures; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the Congress of the United States to normalize trade relations with the Republic of Cuba by dissolving the current U.S. trade embargo and other trade barriers that have been levied against the island nation; 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.