

Cuban Americans to visit family members in Cuba, are going to be abridged more than ever.

This is a travesty of our democracy. How can we allow a small group in the Republican leadership to flaunt the overwhelming will of the Congress, to maintain an anachronistic, Cold War policy toward Cuba that harms the average Cuban and risks great danger once the transition from the Castro regime begins, and to abridge the rights and freedom of Americans? I am profoundly unhappy with this result, and I protest the way this legislative process is being conducted.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

ANNIVERSARY OF THE LITHONIA FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

• Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, in my lifetime, I have witnessed many changes, experienced fantastic joys, and seen countless faces. It is easy in today's fast-moving society to find yourself caught in a perpetual whirlwind. With days full of appointments and meetings, life sometimes seems to lose all semblance of stability. Luckily, I have always had a source of peace and inspiration in my life, Lithonia First United Methodist Church.

With great personal pride and happiness, I come before you today to commemorate an anniversary that is of particular importance to my family and me. One hundred-forty years ago, on Sunday, October 14, 1860, a small group of Lithonians convened for the first time to worship under the leadership of the Reverend Newdaygate B. Ousley. From its humble beginnings in a one room meeting house, Lithonia Methodist Episcopal Church, the forerunner to Lithonia First United Methodist Church began its ministry and a tradition of service that continues even today.

It is ironic that a church that grew during the tumult of the Civil War has lasted as long as Lithonia First has. In fact, it is perhaps even more astounding that over the years since its first meeting, during a time that has seen two world wars and countless technological innovations, the church has pulled even closer together and taken on a significant leadership role in its Georgia community.

For 140 years, Lithonia First United Methodist Church has provided services and leadership for the surrounding region. Through personal outreach, family ministry, and organizing events like flea markets and barbecues to raise money for the needy, Lithonia First has solidified its place of leadership in its community.

Since its simple beginnings, Lithonia First United Methodist Church has grown and become a source of stability and inspiration for its congregants. Under the ministry of its Pastor, Dr. Lawrence E. Wilson, the church has

proven how important faith is to our prosperity, and illustrated the power of a community united. It is my pleasure to honor Lithonia First United Methodist Church for its historic anniversary. I am forever grateful for the church's acceptance, dedication, and commitment, I am truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful community.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL TERRY WILCUTT

• Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Kentuckian Terry Wilcutt on the occasion of his recent journey to the International Space Station as commander of the space shuttle Atlantis.

Congratulations to Colonel Wilcutt, on achieving the kind of academic and professional success it takes to receive the honor of commanding a flight into space. Colonel Wilcutt has flown to space not once, but four times, and on two such flights he has held the title of mission commander. I, along with my fellow Kentuckians, am certainly proud to call him one of Kentucky's own. His accomplishments speak well for his home state as well as his alma mater, Western Kentucky University.

Colonel Wilcutt is a Kentuckian, born and bred. He was born in Russellville, KY, graduated from Louisville's Southern High School in 1967, and is a 1974 graduate of Western Kentucky University with a bachelor of arts degree in math. Colonel Wilcutt taught high school math for 2 years and then entered the Marine Corps. While in the Marine Corps, he attended the notorious "Topgun" Naval Fighter Weapons School, achieved honors at every level of pilot training and has logged over 4,400 flight hours in more than 30 different aircraft.

Colonel Wilcutt's career in aeronautics began in 1990 when he was selected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA, to become an astronaut. Prior to his September 2000 trip to space, Colonel Wilcutt flew on three missions to space and logged more than 724 hours in space.

On behalf of myself and my colleagues in the Senate, I congratulate you on your accomplishments. Only a handful of Americans reach the level of excellence required and receive the honor of being selected to lead missions into space. Colonel Wilcutt, I am proud of you, your fellow Kentuckians are proud of you, and your alma mater of Western Kentucky University is proud of you. Thank you for your brave service to our country, and best wishes for further success in the future.●

PRAISING THE PRESIDENT FOR HIS EXECUTIVE ORDER PROMOTING FEDERAL CONTRACT OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED BUSINESSES

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I speak today to commend the President for

issuing Executive Order 11625, designed to help strengthen the Federal Government's commitment to providing contracting opportunities to disadvantaged businesses.

In 1998, I took to the floor to successfully defend the Transportation Department's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program from those who sought to weaken it. Today, I am pleased to speak out in favor of the President's efforts to strengthen programs like the DBE, along with all minority-owned business government contracting programs.

It should come as no surprise to anyone in this Chamber familiar with small businesses, especially minority owned firms, that government contracting can help provide a strong foundation to build a prosperous small business. As any successful graduate of the Small Business Administration's 8(a) program will tell you, it provides the opportunities, but you have to supply the entrepreneurial spirit and hard work.

And this hand-up approach is what I mean by assisting minority-owned firms. These programs are not a hand-out. Rather, they exist to help level the playing field and to combat the inequities in our society that may prevent these firms from receiving the same opportunities available to other businesses.

These contracts are beneficial not just because they provide initial contracts to small disadvantaged firms, they also help minority firms establish a record of providing goods and services to the Federal Government. This is of critical importance because it assists these businesses in obtaining future contracts. In turn, these firms help provide jobs and competition to larger businesses, saving the taxpayers money through reduced costs and time saving innovations. Thus, these programs have direct and indirect benefits to our economy at all levels.

The Executive Order signed by President Clinton on Friday will help strengthen minority business ownership by directing Federal agencies to take affirmative steps to increase contracting between the Federal government and Small Disadvantaged Businesses, 8(a) Businesses, and Minority Business Enterprises. The Executive Order also holds Federal agencies accountable for carrying out the terms of the Order by requiring them to develop a long-term strategic plan and to submit annual reports to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of their efforts to increase contracting with disadvantaged businesses; requires Federal agencies to ensure the participation of small and disadvantaged businesses when procuring information technology and telecommunications services; and directs Federal departments and agencies to ensure that all creation, placement, and transmission of federal advertising are fully reflective of the nation's diversity.

I applaud President Clinton's action to help ensure the vitality of minority-