

including the Philadelphia Tribune, which, as we all know, has been a leader of the Black press throughout its history, as well as a variety of educational institutions, including his alma mater Allen University, the Cheyney University Foundation, Girard College, and Community College of Philadelphia. Willie has contributed his significant business expertise to the boards of the African American Chamber of Commerce and the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, where he serves as a member of the executive committee. He has also continued his commitment to employment and job creation through his prior service as chair of the Transitional Work Corporation and membership on the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation Board.

It should surprise no one that Willie Johnson and PRWT have been consistently recognized for their significant accomplishments and contributions. In the year 2001 PRWT received the U.S. Conference of Mayors Excellence in Public/Private Partnership Award. Black Enterprise Magazine has ranked PRWT in the top 100 for the past 9 years and in 2009 named them the Industrial/Service Company of the Year. In that same year, 2009, Ernst & Young honored Willie as Entrepreneur of the Year in the Greater Philadelphia region.

Willie has noted that “there is something very unique about Black enterprise: most Black enterprises develop and grow within their own community and within their own region because they are depending on their relationships.” It is this dedication to community engagement which is a critical part of Willie Johnson’s story and the story of PRWT, and it is that community engagement and commitment that we honor today.

Willie Johnson has been a dedicated public servant, a trailblazer for Black business enterprise, and a deeply engaged citizen. Willie’s path has touched the lives of many in our Commonwealth and our country. In building a world-class entrepreneurial, diversified company, while also remaining a responsible corporate citizen dedicated to community betterment, Willie and his partners have built PRWT into an example of the best corporations have to offer. So today, as we come to the end of the month that commemorates Black history, we express our gratitude for the important work Willie Johnson has done throughout his life in service to the people of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and our great Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 12 minutes.

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

CUBA

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, a few minutes ago the body was treated to a report by the Senator from Iowa about his recent trip to Cuba. It sounds as if he had a wonderful trip visiting what he described as a real paradise. He bragged about a number of things he learned on his trip to Cuba which I would like to address briefly.

He bragged about their health care system: Medical schools are free, doctors are free, clinics are free; their infant mortality rate may be even lower than ours.

I wonder if the Senator, however, was informed that, No. 1, the infant mortality rate of Cuba is completely calculated on figures provided by the Cuban Government. And by the way, totalitarian Communist regimes don’t have the best history of accurately reporting things. I wonder if he was informed that the forecast showed that Cuba was 13th in the whole world in infant mortality. I wonder if the government officials who hosted them informed him that in Cuba there are instances reported—including by defectors—that if a child only lives a few hours after birth, they are not counted as a person who ever lived and therefore don’t count against the mortality rate.

I wonder if our visitors to Cuba were informed that in Cuba any time there is any sort of problem with a child in utero, they are strongly encouraged to undergo abortions, and that is why they have an abortion rate that skyrockets and some say is perhaps the highest in the world.

I also heard him talk about the great doctors they have in Cuba. I have no doubt they are very talented. I met a bunch of them. You know where I met them? I met them in the United States because they have defected. Doctors would rather drive a taxicab than be a doctor in Cuba.

I wonder if they spoke to him about the outbreak of cholera they have been unable to control or the three-tiered system of health care that exists where foreigners and government officials get health care that is much better than what is available to the general population.

I also heard him speak about baseball. I know Cubans love baseball since my parents are from Cuba and I grew up in a community surrounded by it. He talked about the great baseball players coming from Cuba, and they are. I wonder if they informed him—in fact, I bet they didn’t talk about those players to him because every single one of those guys playing in the Major Leagues defected. They left Cuba to play here.

He also talked about how people would come up to him in the streets and not a single person said anything negative about America. Nobody came up to him wagging their finger, saying, you Americans and your embargo are hurting us. I am glad to hear that because everyone who wants to lift the

embargo is constantly telling us that the Castros use that to turn the people against us. So obviously that is not true. I am glad to hear confirmation of what I already knew to be true.

I heard about their wonderful literacy rate and how everyone in Cuba knows how to read. That is fantastic. Here is the problem: They can only read censored stuff. They are not allowed access to the Internet. The only newspapers they are allowed to read are Granma or the ones produced by the government. I wish someone on that trip would have asked the average Cuban: With your wonderful literacy skills, are you allowed to read the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal or, for that matter, any blog? The answer is no.

It is great to have literacy, but if you don’t have access to the information, what is the point of it? I wish somebody would have asked about that on that trip.

We heard about Mr. Gross, who is not in jail. He is not a prisoner. He is a hostage. In the speech I heard a moment ago, I heard allusions to the idea—he didn’t say it, but I know the language. I know the code. He made the allusion that maybe there should be a spy swap. Here is the problem: Mr. Gross is not a spy. Do you know what his crime was, if that is what you can call it? He went to Cuba to hand out satellite radios to the Jewish community. We are glad to hear the Cubans are so nice to him that they let him walk 10,000 steps a day, do pullups, and build a necklace out of bottle cap tops. It is very nice that they allow him to do those things. How generous.

I wonder if anybody asked about terrorism, because Cuba is a state sponsor of terrorism. I wonder if anybody asked about the fact that just a few months ago a North Korean ship going from Cuba to North Korea was stopped in the Panama Canal, and it contained items in violation of international sanctions against the government in North Korea.

A report just came out confirming what we already knew, that North Korea has death camps and prison camps. The Cubans are allowing them to evade these sanctions. Did that come up in any of the wonderful conversations in the socialist paradise of the Caribbean? I bet it didn’t.

Let me tell you what the Cubans are really good at. They don’t know how to run their economy, they don’t know how to build a country, and they don’t know how to govern a people. What they are really good at is repression. What they are really good at is shutting off information to the Internet, radio, television, and social media. That is what they are really good at. They are not just good at it domestically, they are good exporters of these things.

Do you want to see Exhibits A, B, C, and D? I will show them to you right now. They have exported repression in real time in our hemisphere right now.

This is the first slide. This gentleman is the former mayor of a municipality in Caracas. His name is Leopoldo Lopez. This is the National Guard of Venezuela pulling him into an armored truck last week. Do you know why? He is protesting against the government. He is protesting against the Government of Venezuela, which are puppets of Havana. They are completely infiltrated by Cubans and agents from Havana. Not agents. Openly. There are foreign military affairs officials involved in Venezuela. Do you know why? Because the Venezuelan Government is giving them cheap oil—even free oil—in exchange for help in doing these sorts of repressions. He is sitting in jail right now because he is protesting against the government.

Here is the next slide. This is Genesis Carmona. She is a beauty queen and student in a city called Valencia. She is on that motorcycle because the government in Venezuela and thugs—these so-called civilian groups that they have armed, which is another export from Cuba—shot her in the head. She died last week.

This is the government that the Cubans support, not just verbally, not just emotionally, but with training and tactics. This is what they do, and she is dead. This is her being taken on a motorcycle to the hospital where they were unable to save her life because she was shot in the head by Venezuelan security forces.

Here is another slide. Earlier I showed you Mr. Lopez. These are his supporters being hit by water cannons in the street because they are protesting against the government. This has been going on for 2 weeks. These are the allies of Cuba. Venezuela is a puppet of Cuba. This is what they do to their own people. They are using water cannons to knock people to the ground. Why? Because they are protesting the government.

Here is another slide. This is a demonstrator detained by police. Look at how they dragged him through the streets. This is in Caracas, Venezuela.

I will show another demonstrator. This is a student—by the way, these are all students in the street. This young man was also shot in the head by security forces and progovernment groups in Caracas. This happened on February 11.

This is what they do in Venezuela. This is what the allies of the Castro regime do. This is what they export. This is what they teach. This is what they support.

It doesn't stop here. Who are Cuba's allies in the world? North Korea; before he fell, the dictator in Libya; the dictator in Syria; the tyrant in Moscow. This is who they line up with. This is a wonderful paradise?

What is happening in Venezuela deserves attention in and of itself. This is happening in our own hemisphere. It is shameful that only three heads of state in this hemisphere have spoken against what is happening. It is shameful that

many Members of Congress who traveled to Venezuela and are friendly with Chavez—some even went to his funeral—sit by and say nothing while this is happening in our own hemisphere. This is what the wonderful Cuban paradise government we heard about supports.

Just this morning the dictator—who calls himself the President, even though he has never been elected to anything—Raul Castro announced he is there to do whatever they need to help them do this.

I listened to the stuff about Cuba and what is happening in Venezuela, and it is very similar, not just in the repression part but the economic part. Venezuela is an oil-rich country with hard-working people. We don't have an embargo against Venezuela. They have a shortage of toilet paper and toothpaste. Why? Because they are incompetent, and communism doesn't work. They look more and more like Cuba economically and politically every single day.

What is the first thing the Venezuelans did when this broke out? They cut off access to Twitter, Facebook, and the Internet. They ran CNN out of there. They closed down the only Colombian station. Years before they had to close down all the independent media outlets that criticized the government. Where did they learn that from? Cuba. Yet we have to listen to what a paradise Cuba is.

I wonder. How come I never read about boatloads of American refugees going to Cuba? Why have close to 1½ million people left Cuba to come here, but the only people who leave here to move there are fugitives from the law and people who steal money from Medicare and go there to hide? Why? How come no American baseball players defect to Cuba? Why don't any American doctors defect to Cuba if it is such a paradise?

He cited a poll that more Americans want normal relations with Cuba. So do I—a democratic and free Cuba. But you want us to reach out and develop friendly relationships with a serial violator of human rights that supports what is going on in Venezuela and every other atrocity on the planet? On issue after issue, they are always on the side of the tyrants. Look it up. This is who we should be opening up to? Why don't they change? Why doesn't the Cuban Government change? Why doesn't the Venezuelan Government change?

Throughout this week, I will outline proposals and ideas about what we need to do and the sanctions we should be pursuing against the individuals responsible for these atrocities.

We have sanctions against North Korea. Why? Because they have a terrorist and illegitimate government. We have sanctions against Iran. Why? Because they support terrorism and have an illegitimate government. We have sanctions against Cuba. Why? Well, you just saw why. Sanctions are a tool

in our foreign policy toolbox. We, as the freest Nation on Earth, are looked to by people in this country and all around the world to stand by them in their moment of need when they clamor for liberty and human rights. They look for America to be on their side, not for America to be cutting geopolitical deals or making it easier to sell tractors to the government there. We should be clear about these things.

Here is the great news. I don't know if they get C-SPAN in Cuba. I bet the government people do. I hope you see that in America we are a free society. You are allowed to stand on the floor and say and spread whatever you want. You think Cuba is a paradise? You think it is an example and model we should be following? You are free to say that here, in the press and anywhere you want. We are also free to come here and tell the truth. We are also free to come here and denounce the violations of human rights and brutality.

I suggest to my colleagues that the next time they go to Cuba, ask to meet with the Ladies in White. Ask to meet with Yoani Sanchez. Ask to meet with the dissidents and the human rights activists who are jailed, repressed, and exiled. Ask to meet them. I bet you will hear something very different than what you heard from your hosts on your last trip to the wonderful socialist paradise called Cuba, because it is a joke. It is a farce. I don't think we should stand by with our arms crossed and watch these things happen in our hemisphere and say nothing about them.

I will close by saying over the last week, I have tweeted about these issues. I get thousands of retweets from students and young people—until they shut them out in Venezuela—who are encouraged by the fact that we are on their side. What they want is what we have, freedom and liberty. That is what all people want.

If America and its policymakers are not going to be firmly on the side of freedom and liberty, who in the world will? Who on this planet will? If this Nation is not firmly on the side of human rights and freedom and the dignity of all people, what nation on Earth will? If we are prepared to walk away from that, then I submit to you that this century is going to be a dangerous and dark one, but I don't believe that is what the American people want from us, nor the majority of my colleagues.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the opportunity to share these thoughts.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.