

but it is clear that our current policy has failed to end these practices.

So just how will these policy changes positively affect the Cuban people and the United States?

Remittances from the U.S. are a vital resource to millions of Cubans and to humanitarian projects in Cuba. Between \$1.4 and \$2 billion in remittances are transferred from the U.S. to Cuba each year, often from Cubans who immigrated to the U.S. to seek new opportunity. Cubans rely on this money to pay for food, monthly electricity bills, or for the daily expenses of life. And humanitarian projects receiving this aid provide food, clean water, essential infrastructure and education to Cubans. When the average monthly salary in Cuba is a mere \$20, the significance of this transfer of money comes into full view. Limits on remittances have stifled real progress, and raising these limits from \$500 to \$2,000 per quarter will usher in a new wave of much needed aid to counter the Cuban government's infliction of serious harm to the well-being of its people.

Despite harsh government regulations, Cuba does have a nascent burgeoning private sector economy. I saw this firsthand last year when I visited Cuba as part of a Congressional delegation. During the trip, I participated in a roundtable with a number of Cuban female entrepreneurs to hear their concerns and discuss what can be done to support their efforts to create new business. I believe this shift in U.S.-Cuba relations will act as a healthy seed for entrepreneurial growth in Cuba. From authorizing expanded commercial sales and exports, to facilitating an expansion of travel to Cuba from the U.S., we will do more to empower the Cuban people than we have in the over 50-year embargo.

Today, Cuba imports approximately 80 percent of its food, a stunning statistic. American agriculture has long supported an opening of relations and now Cuba's economy will be bolstered and this in turn will bring enormous value to American farmers.

Even more empowering is an emboldening tool of democratization, the Internet. As we've seen in countless other countries around the world, the Internet is an individual's megaphone. It is the place for discourse. For collaboration. For free speech. For democracy! By extending telecommunications and technology services to Cuba, the Cuban people will have access to a tremendous exchange of knowledge and ideas with unparalleled power to inspire change.

These efforts by the U.S. are not exhaustive. Only our vigilance and continued assessment of our relations with Cuba will provoke lasting change for Cubans. But it is also imperative for Latin American countries to reinvigorate their ties with Cuba's civil and political leaders. Democratic Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Brazil, can send a strong signal of support to the Cuban Democratic movement by reinvigorating their relations with Cuba, just as the U.S. is doing.

I have supported a change in U.S.-Cuba policy since I was elected to Congress in 1992, and I welcome and celebrate the decision of the President to make this a reality. It's very exciting to look forward to heralding a new era of opportunity and democratic values for Cuba, a pragmatic partnership with the U.S., support from other Latin American countries, and the abandonment of oppression of

the Cuban people by the U.S. embargo, as well as the Cuban government itself.

IN RECOGNITION OF H&H
RESTAURANT IN MACON, GEORGIA

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize H&H Soul Food at 807 Forsyth Street in Macon, Georgia. The popular Southern restaurant has been named the "most iconic restaurant in Georgia" by Thrillist.com, a website that specializes in food, beverage, and entertainment.

In order to earn this honorable designation, a restaurant must have been in existence for at least 30 years, and yet still maintain its popularity among its clients. In other words, title winners not only survive the test of time, but they do so while remaining an "icon" in the community. H&H effectively does both.

The restaurant traces its roots all the way back to the civil rights era, when owners Inez Hill and Louise Hudson, known affectionately as Mama Hill and Mama Louise, first opened the doors in 1959. They have been serving Southern classics ever since, with crowd pleasers such as fried chicken, peach cobbler, and of course, sweet tea.

Historically, the eatery was frequented by prominent musical figures such as The Allman Brothers Band, Wet Willie, and the Molly Hatchet Band. Legend has it that The Allman Brothers Band in their early years did not have enough money to pay for the food but Mama Louise took care of them anyway. She continued to serve other Southern musicians over the years and the restaurant also became a common meeting place for influential civil rights activists, including members and officers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Adding to its list of modern celebrities and change-makers, H&H even welcomed a visit from Oprah Winfrey in 2007.

Co-Founder Inez Hill passed away that very same year, and the restaurant suffered a brief closing at the end of 2013. Nevertheless, H&H overcame adversity and recovered successfully from financial difficulty with the assistance of Macon's Moonhanger Group. The restaurant is thriving again today and continues to welcome its regular patrons as well as new guests from all over. H&H's enduring imprint on Macon's landscape bears tribute to its lasting influence and historic renown in the hearts of the people of Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the iconic H&H restaurant in Macon, Georgia for its rich history, its perseverance, and its dedication to serving the community the most delicious soul food around.

ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSED TO H.R.

30

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letters.

JANUARY 7, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association, and the students they serve, we urge you to vote NO on the Save American Workers Act of 2015 (H.R. 30), scheduled for a floor vote this week. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 114th Congress.

We oppose the bill because we believe it would create a disincentive for employers to provide health care coverage, negatively impacting employer-sponsored health insurance and harming families, children and educators who need coverage.

We believe that the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) shared responsibility for employers, sometimes referred to as the employer penalty, supports the overall goal of expanding quality, affordable coverage to all Americans.

We are concerned that this bill's changes to the ACA's definition of what constitutes full-time employment from "on average at least 30 hours of service per week" monthly to an average of 40 hours per week monthly would adversely affect overall employer-sponsored health coverage. That change would make a shift towards part-time employment much more likely. Employers could respond by cutting employees' hours to under an average of 40 per week to avoid possible shared responsibility penalties and could eliminate coverage for these employees without fear of penalties.

The result of a cut in employee hours would be substantially less employer-sponsored health coverage—and as a result, a potentially large increase in federal spending for the premium tax credits that many low- and moderate-income people will receive under health reform to help them buy coverage through a health insurance marketplace (exchange). Employers and employees would also face a complex new administrative burden as they tried to determine which employees paid on a salaried basis fell above or below the 40-hour mark; salaried school employees' exact hours of service are generally not counted the same way as hourly employees' hours, but tallying their in-school and out-of-school hours would suddenly become issues of concern to employers interested in avoiding penalties.

Additionally if employment-based coverage is reduced, an even greater number of low-income individuals and their families in the 23 states that have failed to expand Medicaid would be unable to afford to buy health coverage. In those states, childless adults whose incomes fall below 100 percent of the federal poverty line would not only be denied access to Medicaid coverage, but they would be ineligible for premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions through a health insurance marketplace. Moving the full-time definition from 30 hours to 40 hours, as this bill does, would only expand the number of people hurt by this coverage gap.

We believe H.R. 30 misses the mark by substituting "40 hours" for "30 hours" because it would do nothing to stop employers' misuse of the ACA's employer penalty provisions as a justification for cutting employees' hours of service and health coverage. Experience with this portion of the ACA shows that one of the biggest implementation challenges in the education sector consists of making sure that employers and other health plan sponsors fully understand the law's provisions related to shared responsibility for employers. For years, we have engaged with the Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service to ensure that regulations on shared responsibility for employers work consistently well in the education sector, and believe regulators have taken important steps in this direction.