

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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CUBAN REFUGEE ADJUSTMENT ACT

DOLE AMENDMENT TO CONDITION REPEAL OF ACT UPON A DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN CUBA PASSES SENATE WITH BROAD BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

I have the utmost respect for Senator Simpson and his work on immigration. I do not often disagree with him, but on one issue I do. Section 197 of this bill repeals the Cuban Refugee Adjustment Act. The Cuban Refugee Adjustment Act of 1966 was enacted to facilitate the granting of legal permanent resident status to Cubans fleeing their homeland. The Cuban Adjustment Act, at its core, is about standing on the side of oppressed people -- our neighbors -- who are fleeing Castro's dictatorship. The United States has consistently stood with the Cuban people. That is why I rise in opposition to the proposed elimination of the Cuban Refugee Adjustment Act before a democratic transition takes place in Cuba.

First of all, conditions in Cuba have not changed since the implementation of the Act. In 1996, as in 1966, Castro brutally represses dissent and systematically abuses human rights. The U.S. has had a consistent and determined policy of three decades supporting the Cuban people's aspirations for freedom and democracy. A policy that this Congress re-affirmed when it passed the Dole-Helms-Burton "Libertad" Act of 1996.

Not An Entitlement to Permanent Residency

Let me state clearly what this act does and does not do. It essentially allows Cuban refugees who reach U.S. shores to apply, at the discretion of the Attorney General, for permanent residence status without being forced to return to Cuba. It is not a mechanism to allow more Cubans to enter the United States. It is not an entitlement to permanent residency. It is merely a procedure for those already here and seeking legal status. To repeal this Act would give the Castro regime a propaganda victory, but would not measurably affect the number of Cubans reaching America. The Clinton-Castro Migration Pact -- negotiated in secret and without congressional consultation -- allows over 100,000 Cuban immigrants to enter the United States over the next five years. Repealing the Cuban Refugee Adjustment Act will not decrease this number. Repealing the Act will only send the wrong signal to Castro's dictatorship.

That is why I, along with Senators Graham, Mack, and Abraham, are introducing an amendment that states that the Cuban Refugee Adjustment Act would only be repealed when conditions stipulated under the "Libertad" Act have been met, specifically, that a democratic government is in place in Cuba.

A repeal of the Act at this time is not in the national interest of the United States. Recent events have demonstrated once again that the Castro regime remains a threat to security in the Caribbean, America's "front yard". Let us once again stand together in sending a strong message to Fidel Castro and to the Cuban people that we stand for democratic change in Cuba.

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