

Obama got it right on Cuban embargo

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Although I do not always agree with President Barack Obama, I have to admit his recent changes on Cuba are a stroke of genius. I encourage our congressmen and senators to continue this progress and end the embargo.

Forget for a moment that the embargo failed to advance the ideals of human rights or democracy, or that the actual result was to entrench the Castro regime and make life extremely hard for ordinary Cubans. Look at the global impact these changes will have. Improved diplomatic relations and trade with Cuba will certainly undermine if not override the ties of other countries hostile to the U.S.

I traveled to Cuba earlier this year and have another educational trip planned. The Cuban people are warm and welcoming in spite of daily life difficulties such as unreliable electrical service, decaying urban infrastructure and shortages of basic necessities. Despite these challenges, Cubans are a people of warmth, intelligence and creative and artistic achievements. The geography is beautiful with forested mountains and lovely beaches. With just a little encouragement and support for trade and free enterprise, this country has great potential, and the U.S. is in the perfect position to have some influence on redevelopment.

The Castros' reign is nearing the end. This is the perfect time for the U.S. to influence democratic and free enterprise changes to rebuild this nation to achieve its potential.

These changes are the best foreign-relations actions taken by the U.S. in a long time. Bravo!

Jeanne Sturges, Tulsa

Thievery is OK?

So, Associate Editor Mike Jones dislikes sanctions ("How about a (Cuban) cigar? Dec. 21). So, bad



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President Barack Obama speaks Dec. 17 in the Cabinet Room of the White House to announce the U.S. will end its approach to Cuba that some feel has failed to advance U.S. interests.

behavior should be condoned? So, it's OK to do business as usual with a regime that confiscated (that translates to "stole" for nongovernmental theft) American businesses?

So, what is his opinion about thievery in general? It's OK?

David Hansen, Tulsa

A good system

John L. Harlan ("Employer's shield," Dec. 19) said that Oklahoma's workers compensation law is merely a shield for employers against lawsuits by employees.

The law does shield employers from lawsuits for on-the-job injuries, except when the employee is injured as a result of an intentional act by the employer. In exchange for losing the right to sue the employer for compensation for on-the-job injuries, the employee gains the right to compensation from the employer for injuries within the course and scope of employment without having to prove the employer was at fault.

Employers were not required to compensate injured employees for medical costs and lost wages prior to enactment of workers comp laws. The employee was forced to sue the employers, if the employer was not benevolent. That worked in favor of the employer as most employees could not afford to pay an attorney to sue the employer.

Under the workers compensation law, all employees injured on the job are entitled to compensation for medical expenses, lost wages and disability without the need to sue the employer or prove negligence.

The ability for all injured employees to be compensated is a greater benefit to society than the ability for only a small number of employees to receive large awards.

The system we have, one that compensates all employees for on-the-job injuries, is better than a system that compensates only the most severely injured employees.

Bob Moody, Tulsa

Reading recipe

For the past year or so, I have been reading that Oklahoma children can't read.

Long ago, I attended a little country school at Grayhorse in Osage County. I began in the first grade, and there were three grades in each classroom. We had a wonderful teacher, Alice Oyler, who had a theory that worked then and ought to work now.

The second-and third-graders would get started on their day's assignments and the first grade would be

given pages to color. One by one, Mrs. Oyler took us into a corner, sat down with flash cards and taught us to read. While learning to read, we also were learning to spell.

One parent complained that all the first-graders were doing was coloring or using flash cards. She told the parent that she had to get the children to read. There was no sense giving other assignments if they could not read. She said if they can read, they can learn.

Everyone who ever attended Oyler's class came out of first grade reading at a high level.

I love to read and have a houseful of books. If you can read, you are never lonely and you can sit in an easy chair and travel far around the world. Reading really is FUNdamental.

Teach the very youngest to read. They will then learn everything else.

Shirley Banther, Ochelata

Oklahoma's 'senator'

It is perplexing that Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., is inferred as "not one of us" according to Editorial Pages Editor Wayne Greene's article, "One of us: Value of a hometown senator" (Dec. 14).

Warren has championed her congressional efforts for the average American because of the lifestyle she lived in Oklahoma City, where she was born and raised as part of what she called "the ragged edge of the middle class."

With a pioneer spirit developed while living in Oklahoma, she is battling courageously, for not only her fellow Oklahomans, but all Americans against Wall Street and the big banks.

These entities caused our economy to spiral out of control into the Great Recession, which resulted in millions of American lives left in destitution with loss of jobs and homes. Yet, these big banks were bailed out with taxpayer money and now are back again with their great fortunes to buy Congress to lessen their regulations, which was successful with the recent spending bill passed by Congress, despite the objections of Warren.

As our state is such an isolated island because of the dominance of a one-party system, perhaps most Oklahomans do not know that Warren was an inductee of the 2011 Oklahoma Hall of Fame. She also is being drafted as a possible candidate for president in 2016. Her attributes are too numerous to mention in this letter but can be found in abundance online.

Finally, Oklahoma has a senator of whom it can be proud.

Ann Kent, Tulsa

Questions for council

My mother taught me that in all your getting, get an understanding. With that in mind, I pose the questions that have been asked of me.

During the Dec. 11 City Council meeting, there were six speakers who opposed moving \$248,000 from the park fund to the Phoenix District and three who favored moving the money. There were more people in attendance who opposed moving the money. Why did the City Council vote unanimously to move the money to the Phoenix District? Does this mean that the majority rules is no longer applicable?

Why was District 1 Councilor Jack Henderson so intent on moving the money? What does he have against improving B.C. Franklin Park to its greatest potential? Isn't it important that the money would have provided completed projects that are of a health benefit to the community? Wouldn't the projects bring more people with their money to the area? Wouldn't this bring money to the Shoppes on Peoria due to its close proximity to the park?

Will the money placed in the Phoenix District provide completed projects? Why did Henderson make a point of saying that the people who worked on the park improvements don't live in the area? Isn't the community at large supposed to work together? Why would people who support the Phoenix District oppose moving the money? Wouldn't it be hypocritical to take the money knowing they would fight to protect money for the district?

Trade Chandler, Tulsa

World without cops

Wouldn't it be a wonderful world if we didn't need cops to protect us?

Of course, this won't happen because there are those who rob, rape, murder, loot, assault, deal and abuse drugs, abuse alcohol, etc. The list goes on.

Cops are enemies until you need them. They then become your friend. Who else do you call if one of the above involves you? Political activists? I doubt it. I was always taught to treat others and their property as if it was my own.

One just has to read or listen to the daily news to get all the negative that is happening in today's world. There are those who want to divide this country rather than unite it. I hope they get what they deserve.

Check the crime stats. They'll tell you who's doing what.

Ellis H. Roberson, Coffeyville, Kansas

Rubio off base

Has Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., been living in a mayonnaise jar these past few years?

How can he say normalizing relationships with Cuba is bad for America? He wants to block any nominee the president might suggest for ambassador to Cuba. He wants to disallow any U.S. funding for an American consulate or embassy in Cuba. He says Cuba is a repressive state, imprisoning or executing anybody opposed to the Castro government. Rubio wants to continue a trade and cultural embargo.

Well, Rubio obviously doesn't read newspapers or history books. He forgot China, an abusive country when it comes to human rights. China is a most favored nation trading partner. He forgot Russia, an abusive government when it comes to human rights. Russia also receives favor as a trading partner.

Rubio also has forgotten our middle east oil trading partners. Abusers of women and people of other religions. And, I can probably find other.

As Rubio sounds off, American business is chomping at the bit to start selling manufactured and agriculture goods to Cuba.

Oklahoma would benefit from this new trading partnership. And Wall Street can't wait to get its hands on a good Cuban cigar. Not to mention all those antique car buffs drooling over all those 1950s American cars in Cuba.

So, what's the complaint. Let's go for it. It's good for America.

C.R. Ayers, Tulsa

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