

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 239

BY REPRESENTATIVE EMERSON

A RESOLUTION

To encourage closer economic relationships between the United States and the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the negotiation of a free trade agreement between the two countries.

WHEREAS, for decades, the United States and the Republic of China (Taiwan) have fostered a close relationship that has been of mutual economic, cultural, and strategic benefit; bilateral trade between the U.S. and Taiwan reached \$65.3 billion in 2016, making Taiwan the tenth largest trading partner of the U.S. as well as the largest per capita importer of U.S. agricultural products; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan maintains biennial agricultural procurement missions to the U.S. to sign multi-billion-dollar supply deals and has been actively dispatching a substantial delegation to participate in the SelectUSA Investment Summit since 2013; and

WHEREAS, U.S. exports to Taiwan, combined with Taiwan's investment in the U.S., support more than three hundred thirty thousand well-paid U.S. jobs; both nations could realize further economic gains through the establishment of a free trade agreement and by enhancing the platforms of Trade and Investment Framework Agreement and Digital Economy Forum; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan remains a beacon of democracy as well as the only full-fledged democracy in the Chinese-speaking world; the results of Taiwan's 2016 presidential election, which marked both the third peaceful transition of political power since the first popular vote for president held in 1996 and the first transition of its national legislative majority since 1949, serve as proof that Taiwan is a worthy candidate for the Community of Democracies; and

WHEREAS, the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 has been the cornerstone of relations between the U.S. and Taiwan for thirty-eight years, and both countries have further affirmed that Taiwan is an important and enduring economic and security partner through working in a mutually beneficial partnership to address global challenges in such areas as international humanitarian assistance, public health, and technology under the Global Cooperation and Training Framework established in June of 2015; and

WHEREAS, travel from Taiwan to the United States has increased by more than fifty percent since the announcement of Taiwan's participation in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program in 2012, EVA Air launched its direct Taipei-Houston route in 2015, and the U.S. and Taiwan signed a joint statement on an International Expedited Traveler Initiative in 2016, all significant efforts which will promote tourism and encourage exchanges between the two peoples; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan acts as a natural hub to other Asian destinations, with Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration providing services for more than one and a half million controlled flights carrying fifty-eight million incoming and outgoing passengers annually; and

WHEREAS, non-traditional security threats are increasing in the twenty-first century, and the meaningful participation and inclusion of Taiwan, the twenty-second largest economy in the world, to the International Criminal Police Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the World Health Assembly would be beneficial to all nations and their people; and

WHEREAS, this year marks the thirty-second anniversary of the sister-state relationship between the state of Louisiana and Taiwan and the thirty-seventh anniversary of the sister-city relationship between Baton Rouge and Taichung, a bond nurtured through mutually beneficial exchanges; more than four thousand three hundred jobs in Louisiana are supported by Taiwan-affiliated companies, and Louisiana exported \$2.06 billion in goods to Taiwan in 2016, making Taiwan the fifth largest export market for Louisiana in Asia; and

WHEREAS, Formosa Petrochemical Corp is planning an eleven billion-dollar investment of an industrial complex in St. James Parish, which would create one thousand two hundred new direct jobs with an average annual salary of eighty-four thousand five

hundred dollars plus benefits and result in eight thousand new indirect jobs for a total of nine thousand two hundred jobs in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, allowing the recognition of valid, noncommercial driver's licenses between Louisiana and Taiwan is part of the effort to promote a business-friendly environment in order to advance mutual trade and investment.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby encourage closer economic relationships between the United States and Taiwan and the negotiation of a free trade agreement between the two countries.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the signing of a joint statement on an International Expedited Traveler Initiative between the United States and Taiwan, which encourages tourism; does hereby support Taiwan's meaningful participation in the International Criminal Police Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the World Health Assembly; and does hereby encourage and support the mutual recognition of noncommercial driver's licenses between Louisiana and Taiwan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby celebrate the thirty-second anniversary of the sister-state relationship between Louisiana and Taiwan and does hereby commend Louis M. Huang, Director General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Houston, Texas, for efforts and contributions toward enhancing cooperation between Taiwan and Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Louis M. Huang.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES