

preparation, public education, remediation and control was critical. She said that chikungunya virus spread in the Caribbean was attributed to the lack of cooperation among governments and agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

[TIME, Apr. 20, 2016]

CONGRESS MUST ACT IMMEDIATELY TO
COMBAT ZIKA VIRUS

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS NEED FEDERAL FUNDING
TO PREVENT OUTBREAKS

(By Sheila Jackson Lee)

Members of Congress recently received news so chilling that it is imperative that they take immediate action to approve the about \$1.9 billion in emergency funding for Zika preparedness requested by the Obama administration. According to Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Disease, the mosquito that carries the Zika virus, which is already spreading rapidly in Latin America and the Caribbean, has been detected in nearly 30 states and could infect hundreds of thousands of people in Puerto Rico.

In Brazil, Zika has been identified as the cause in many recent cases of microcephaly, a birth defect resulting in babies being born with small heads and developmental problems. Zika poses a special risk for pregnant women since the virus can be transmitted through the bloodstream to the fetus. Previously, it was thought that Zika was only a problem during the first trimester of pregnancy, but according to officials at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, it has now been learned that the virus is likely to be a problem throughout the term of pregnancy.

In February, the Obama administration requested Congress to approve about \$1.9 billion in emergency Zika prevention funding, but to date Republican congressional leadership has not acted. If Congress does not act to approve the urgently needed funding, federal public health agencies will be forced to divert funding away from research into malaria, tuberculosis and a universal flu vaccine.

It is outrageous that the Republican congressional leadership is putting at risk the health and safety of hundreds of thousands of persons by refusing to do its job. The impact of that failure of responsibility is likely to be felt most severely in the congressional districts like the one I represent in Houston, Texas.

Because the summer months in areas along the Gulf Coast and the southwest region of the United States are unusually long and hot, Houston is expected to be an epicenter of any Zika outbreak in the U.S. In impoverished areas of the city and county, there are many open ditches in residential areas and lots where tires are illegally dumped. These are ideal breeding habitats for *Aedes aegypti*, the mosquito species that carries the Zika virus. Experts now know that it can also be transmitted in other ways, including sex.

Mosquito control will not be sufficient to limit the spread of the Zika virus because the *Aedes aegypti* has evolved to live on human blood, which it will choose over animal blood whenever it has the opportunity to do so. This breed of mosquito lives near the ground and near people, which limits the effectiveness of areole spraying. The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito can breed in a habitat as small as a cup of dirty water, it can hide under leaves, and it will seek out homes where people live.

To combat the threat posed by Zika, it is essential that the public be enlisted as the first line of defense. But for this effort to be

successful, resources must be available to implement community-based mosquito control and abatement programs. That is why I have called upon the Republican congressional leadership to approve the requested about \$1.9 billion emergency Zika prevention funding immediately, with \$100 million dedicated to support local government efforts to conduct environmental cleanup activities to remove items in populated areas that promote mosquito breeding. This funding would also support coordinated public-education campaigns to encourage proactive efforts to seek early medical care when Zika virus symptoms are present, or early in a pregnancy.

The funding would also provide the resources to teach community residents how to check for and safely address mosquito breeding areas; repair or replace broken or torn door and window screens; and provide DEET mosquito replant products to low-income communities and mosquito netting for beds in homes that have no air conditioning.

Last month, I convened the first of what are planned to be several strategic planning sessions with state and local officials to prevent any outbreak or spread of the Zika virus. Here in Houston and Harris County we are prepared to meet this serious challenge to public health and safety with determination and resolve. All we are lacking is the federal funding needed to succeed. And that is why Congress must act immediately.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, March 10, 2016.

Hon. SYLVIA MATHEWS BURWELL,

Secretary of Health and Human Services, U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY MATHEWS BURWELL: I applaud the President and commend his designation of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the lead federal agency charged with responding to the threat posed by the Zika virus. I am writing to request that the Department of Health and Human Services establish a National Taskforce on the Prevention of Zika Virus infections in pregnant women and girls.

The Zika Virus is a serious illness for pregnant girls and women. Zika virus can be spread from a pregnant woman to her fetus and has been linked to a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly in babies of mothers who had Zika virus while pregnant. Other problems have been detected among fetuses and infants infected with Zika virus before birth, such as absent or poorly developed brain structures, defects of the eye, hearing deficits, and impaired growth. CDC recommends special precautions for pregnant women. There is no treatment or cure for those infected with Zika Virus.

Experts believe the Zika Virus will be a seasonal epidemic for North America, but will primarily affect those states in the south and will flare up in the summer and continue into the fall in tropical zones. As you know, in Texas we have had particularly hot and long summers, with tropical zones along the Gulf Coast that include Houston Texas. There are two types of the *Aedes* mosquitoes known to carry the virus that found in the Houston area. Houston will possibly be ground zero for the United States because of environmental conditions that support breeding of mosquitoes that are known to carry Zika Virus in the Americas that are found in close proximity to low income areas and the proximity. Prevention measures consist of community based mosquito control programs that are able to reduce vector populations and personal protection measures to reduce the likelihood of being bitten by infected mosquitos.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,

SHEILA JACKSON LEE,

Member of Congress.

THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY
MEN'S SOULS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUSSELL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting time. Sometimes you think about the literary quote "These are the times that try men's souls," but there have been trying times before and there will be again.

But our Congress continues to be urged to do things that sound like a great solution, sound like a good, compassionate thing to do, but when you get to the bottom of them, sometimes they are the most uncompassionate things we could do.

For example, there are reports of sexual abuse victims who are female being deeply troubled. There are FBI statistics that indicate that perhaps 18, maybe 20, percent of women in America have been sexually assaulted. Other types of crimes on females raise the percentage even higher.

There are statistics that indicate transgender may be three-tenths of 1 percent. Who knows what the right numbers are? But I think we should be far more compassionate with female sexual abuse victims that comprise such a large number in weighing whether you want to have men come walking in on women in restrooms, dressing rooms.

Also, the talk has been this year that we are going to have sentencing reform because it is the compassionate thing to do.

We are told that there are massive, massive numbers of people who have been incarcerated in Federal prison for simple possession cases, and we have moved on. We have evolved in this country where we don't look on those as critically. So it is time to start releasing some of those people.

Having been a judge of a felony court, I can't say I did the right thing on sentencing in every case, but I can say I struggled. I got all the information that was available. I considered it before we ever undertook the sentencing hearing. I considered everything submitted at the sentencing hearing and wrestled and tried to get to a just and appropriate sentence.

Judges do that all over the country. Some think they are being compassionate and quickly release criminals, not being quite as dedicated to reviewing backgrounds and the indications of repeat offenses to come. So they release people too quickly, sentence them too lightly, and they go back and commit other offenses.

We know from the recidivism rate that is going to happen, but you try

your best, as a judge, to do the right thing.

Then the thought of someone in Washington that never ever reviewed all of the facts of the case, never heard all of the evidence that you or the jury heard in assessing sentence, who have just got some big picture that they think they may be able to apply and generalize sufficiently—the thought is repugnant that they would come in and say: We are going to have this blanket set aside, a reduction in the sentence that was achieved through a very deliberative process.

□ 1245

There are also a lot of fallacies and a lot of fiction that has been thrown out regarding sentences, some vast many that have been sentenced to and sitting in Federal prison for just having a little bit of marijuana; we have got to let those go.

Anybody that has prosecuted knows, whether you have prosecuted as a State prosecutor or a Federal prosecutor, Federal prosecutors have traditionally not been interested in small possession cases. They are not interested. They weren't in east Texas.

When I was in court, when I have been a prosecutor and a judge, the State prosecutors in east Texas and the Federal prosecutors actually worked very well together. Every now and then there might be a rare case where the State prosecutors would realize that there was a very heinous offense that was committed, but the Federal Court may have a higher range of punishment, and because this person is such a threat to society, might ask the Federal prosecutors to take a look to see if this is something you would be interested in pursuing. More often than not it was not. But most of those cases are handled in State court.

I don't have any doubt that we should be reviewing drug offenses when it comes to the new opium-related cases. There have been so many developments. We have got development of synthetics now that were not known, so they are not listed as items that would generate a prison sentence, that do enough damage to individuals that they should be considered to be listed in a crime to possess. So those are things we need to be constantly looking at.

There is an article from Adam Kredon of the Free Beacon from yesterday. The headline is: "Obama Administration Freed 19,723 Criminal Illegal Immigrants in 2015."

It says: "The Obama administration released nearly 20,000 illegal immigrants convicted of crimes from custody in 2015, according to new figures published by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement bureau. The 19,723 illegals freed from custody during the last year had a total of 64,197 convictions between them, according to the data. This included 8,324 violent convictions and 208 homicide convictions."

Those are people who came into the country illegally who not only broke

our immigration laws to come into the country, but some of them are coming in more than once illegally, some after they have been deported and come back in to commit more crimes, but nearly 20,000 released in 2015, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, according to ICE, and it doesn't appear that they are all being deported.

Certainly if they were, there is no bar to them turning right around and coming back. One man who had, I think it was, nine DWI cases that came before me in a felony court, and the Federal authorities had never been interested in deporting him until he had a violent accident. He came before me, and I sent him, appropriately, to prison. Within 6 months he is back in my court. So I had to ask, through the interpreter, that since I sent him to prison, how is he back in my court for a new crime of violence on other people?

It turned out that very shortly after I sent him to prison, finally, the Federal authorities acted—just much too late for victims that were involved—and they deported him. According to what he said through his interpreter, they took him down to the border and watched him go across the border. Then as soon as the people that deported him left, that same day, that same hour, he came right back across the border.

What about all the victims? Do we want to talk about compassion? What about all the victims of the people who have been harmed, hurt, and obviously cases of people being killed because we don't secure our border, and instead of letting people serve out the sentences that a court very deliberately sentenced, they let them go?

As if we are some ubiquitous group here in Washington, somehow once you come into the District of Columbia, we are so much wiser than any judge sitting on any court anywhere in the Federal system that we know better than they did.

I can tell you I have heard from judges from around the country that:

If I had known that some jerk in Washington was going to come around and reduce my sentence that I agonized to arrive at, I would have sentenced much more harshly so that the appropriate sentence would have been what was arrived at by the brilliant, wise, ubiquitous jerk in Washington that set it aside too early.

This article from April 12 is: "Sentencing Reform Legislation Would Disproportionately Favor Noncitizens."

It says: "U.S. prisoner data clearly shows two things. One, the majority of low-level drug offenders are serving their sentences in State, not Federal prisons. Two, most of those incarcerated in Federal prison for drug charges are noncitizens. While it may be worthwhile to pursue reform at the Federal level, it will do very little to address the problems identified by proponents of sentencing reform, and it would do almost nothing to reduce sentences for U.S. citizen drug offenders."

In fact, on further down it says:

"As of April 7, 2016, there were 196,285 prisoners in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, with 46.5 percent of these prisoners—91,270—sentenced for drug offenses. The percentage of prisoners incarcerated for drugs is just over 2½ times greater than the State prison population. However, overall, there are fewer prisoners serving time in Federal prison for drug charges than in State prisons," which have 212,000.

"The Federal Government collects data differently for State and Federal prisoners. In order to get the breakdown of offenses for Federal drug prisoners, data from the U.S. Sentencing Commission is available. Looking at the sentencing statistics from FY 2007 to FY 2015, a clear distinction between Federal and State prison populations is that the proportion of Federal prisoners serving time for drug possession is much higher than that for State prisoners, and Hispanics are disproportionately represented among Federal drug inmates . . . There is a higher ratio of Hispanics serving drug sentences for both trafficking and possession convictions in Federal prisons. As Daniel Horowitz points out, this is because many of the drug offenders in Federal prison are serving sentences for drug convictions related to the illicit drug trade on the U.S.-Mexico border.

"In response to a congressional request regarding sentencing data for Federal drug offenses, the U.S. Sentencing Commission sent data showing that 95 percent of the 305 individuals serving time in Federal prison for simple drug offenses are noncitizen . . . only 13 simple possession cases were tried in nonborder districts in FY 2014 . . . In a letter sent to Senator JEFF SESSIONS last fall, the Federal Bureau of Prisons reported that 77 percent of individuals convicted of Federal drug possession charges and more than 25 percent of individuals convicted of Federal drug trafficking charges in FY 2015 were noncitizen."

Sometimes graphs give us a good look and give us a better picture of what we are talking about than a word picture does. So here is what the Federal Bureau of Prisons reported last fall, that of all the people in prison, in Federal prison, U.S. Federal prison for drug possession charges and convictions, 77 percent are noncitizens of the United States.

That is right. We are using our United States prisons when it comes to Federal possession of drugs. Seventy-seven percent of them housed are noncitizens. Twenty-three percent of those in Federal prison for drug possession charges and convictions are citizens of the United States.

"The profile for Federal drug prisoners is different than at the State level, and this is why Congress needs to recognize and address these differences when crafting legislation that will effect this population. Federal drug and immigration enforcement are for now

inextricably tied together, and Mexican drug cartels are a serious threat to public safety. A serious debate over how to best address the War on Drugs and its effects on American communities can not ignore the immigration component.

“Sentencing reform bills reducing penalties for some Federal prisoners . . . are being portrayed by their supporters as a long overdue corrective to harsh sentencing laws for individuals who violate Federal drug laws, which they argue create racial disparities in the Nation’s prison population.

“Reforming drug sentencing laws is one thing. Releasing criminal aliens back into U.S. interior is quite another. The Obama administration has already shown its willingness to do the latter, including those who were deemed to be criminal threats to the public. Without a bill with strong, clear language and, most importantly, a Congress willing to extend oversight over the executive branch, it is plain that the sentencing reform legislation likely to soon come before Congress will accomplish little more than to provide an early release for dangerous criminal aliens, while still failing to hold President Obama to account for his failure to enforce U.S. immigration law.”

This article from Daniel Horowitz from this month’s *Conservative Review* said: “Yes, it was all an April Fool’s joke. The entire rationale and premise on which the top legislative priority of the D.C. people was built is an illusion. On a Federal level, there is no widespread epidemic of people being locked up for nonviolent drug offenses.

“The entire debate over the prison population on a Federal level is absurd. Proponents of jailbreak legislation speak about the issue in the abstract and concoct all sorts of myths as to who is sentenced for Federal crimes.

“This is, in fact, a finite and verifiable population. Why don’t we stop talking past each other and actually take a look at what is the 800-pound gorilla behind the Federal criminal justice system?”

□ 1300

From there he goes on to talk about illegal immigration and the effect on our prisons. He said:

“What is clear when you juxtapose the total convictions to the large number of immigration-related sentences and the drug trafficking convictions, the 800-pound gorilla in the room when dealing with Federal crimes, is—illegal immigration. Both directly, by clogging up the system with immigration cases, and indirectly, through the open border and drug cartels and proliferation of drugs, more than half of all Federal sentences are a byproduct of immigration and the drugs that are brought in as a result of the porous border . . . Hence, the entire premise of Federal jailbreak legislation—that there are infinite numbers of individuals serving time in Federal prison for

‘nonviolent drug offenses’—is complete bunk.

“If we would deal with the immigration problem and keep out much of the drug infestation by building the fence”—it doesn’t have to be a wall—“and implementing visa tracking, both the direct effects of immigration and the drug problem, which is a byproduct of immigration, would reach a manageable level. We would save a lot of money on incarceration costs and dramatically reduce the prison population, all without risking the safety and security of Americans by indiscriminately and retroactively releasing violent criminals into our communities.”

And people should understand, what most prosecutors will tell you is, especially in the Federal system—they don’t have plea agreements like normally you find in most States—they agree on what charges they will allow a defendant to plea to and which ones they will drop. So, if there is violence in an offense, if there is a gun used in a drug offense or violence in a drug offense and a Federal prosecutor is trying to get someone involved for carrying out that violent drug offense, but they know they want to get the guy that is over this one, they want to get the bigger fish and the even bigger fish, they are going to have to have some kind of negotiation at that level. And what they negotiate is: “All right. We will leave off the violent part of this offense and let you plead to that,” or, “We will leave out the burglary,” or, “We will leave out this other. We will leave out something else and we will let you plea to this, and the State has agreed they won’t pursue that burglary.” They work out an agreement so that part of the offense that would have gotten them a much more severe sentence is left out in return for their cooperation to go after the bigger fish.

So when somebody in Washington that has not analyzed the facts of each case and the reason for the recommended charge to be accepted by the court goes about and just releases somebody, they are normally going to do an injustice to the victims. Some say drugs are a victimless crime. Some are tempted to think that until they look at the involvement of drugs and violent crime in burglaries. It is phenomenal.

With a porous border the way we have, we see the drugs pouring in. And I literally say “we see.”

We had a hearing yesterday with a lady who lived down near the border. Actually, she pointed out that our Federal law enforcement immigration officials are about 25 miles north of the border. We are not enforcing the border there in Arizona where she was pointing out. She and her husband put up video cameras and displayed it in the hearing. Clearly, these were guys carrying big amounts of something, apparently drugs, passing by back and forth, just bringing drugs into America because we were not enforcing and securing our border and our country.

If we want to have true sentencing reform, it should not be undertaken until the border is secure so that we know we are not releasing more criminals to the interior of the United States to commit more crimes and to be back involved in the drug trade.

I know some years back, after I got here, Congress decided to make it more difficult for people to get Sudafed because it was used in the process of producing methamphetamine. In east Texas, cooking methamphetamine was a problem. But most of the cooks stunk, so when people would smell something violent and they called in, immediately law enforcement would think, oh, maybe some meth is being cooked. They would go, and often that was the case. So we made it hard for law-abiding people to get Sudafed that works a whole lot better than Sudafed with any initials after it that is not true Sudafed.

Some in the DEA and law enforcement back in Texas tell me what has happened: Yeah, we were able to shut down a lot of methamphetamine cooking in Texas, but since our border is so porous, the drug cartels in Mexico right across our border are pouring through synthetics and far more potent drugs. They are hooking our young people, our Americans, on drugs that are harder to get off of and induce more unpleasantness and crime.

We really didn’t solve anything because we didn’t deal with what was called the 800-pound gorilla in the room. It is illegal immigration. It is an unsecured border.

And, of course, some can’t help but raise questions about political motivation. Because when you are trying desperately to win, say, a Presidential election or a local election, say, in Virginia, and you know from surveys that have been done, if you can restore the voting rights to people that have been in prison, a big majority of those will vote Democrat, and then when you think about the potential—wow.

So if we just cut loose a massive number of illegal immigrants that are in prison, and then you have a Governor like you have in Virginia who then says, hey, we are going to let felons have voting rights, never mind you are not supposed to vote unless you are a U.S. citizen, we are finding that there is fraud in elections despite what some say.

My friend John Fund had a good book on the fraud involved in elections and the voting process around the country. Look, if we are going to stop from disenfranchising real voters and real American citizens, then we have got to make sure that we have legitimate voters. That means voter ID. Why not? I mean, you have got to have an ID to do much of anything in this country. Why not have one and make sure that the disenfranchising process is not happening because we make sure that every voter is a legitimate voter?

Those who were worried about it preventing minorities from voting, go

look at places like Georgia. It has been established that, when photo ID requirements were added, there were actually more minorities that voted after that. It didn't just disfranchise the minority. What it disenfranchised were people that wanted to vote as illegal aliens or illegally.

But parenthetically, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but wonder if you were the head of a political party, hypothetically, if you were the head of a political party and your party believed their hope for winning the next election was to get people who were felons to vote, whether they reformed or not, maybe it is time to take a look at what your party stands for.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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HONORING THE FINCA VIGIA FOUNDATION: A VERY SPECIAL U.S.-CUBA COLLABORATION TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE THE CUBAN HOME OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor The Finca Vigia Foundation, based in Massachusetts, and the extraordinary model it provides of what Americans and Cubans working together can accomplish.

Over the past 13 years, this special collaboration has restored and protected the home, documents, and related materials of Ernest Hemingway's home in Cuba, the Finca Vigia, located 12 miles outside of Havana, in the village of San Francisco de Paula.

Like so many stories on Capitol Hill, this one began when a visitor from Massachusetts walked into my office. Jenny Phillips had an interesting story to tell because her grandfather was Ernest Hemingway's editor and long-time friend, Maxwell Perkins.

She and her husband, Frank, had traveled to Cuba earlier that year to visit the Finca Vigia, which the Cubans had lovingly cared for and operated as a museum since Hemingway's death. We are grateful to those Cubans because there would be no Hemingway House without their decades of devotion to his memory and his legacy.

In addition to touring the house and grounds, Jenny and Frank also saw thousands of Hemingway documents and photographs that were in boxes and containers in the basement, most unknown to writers and researchers. They recognized the priceless value of these papers to Hemingway scholars worldwide, but they also knew that the political divide between the United States and Cuba made their preservation and accessibility a problem.

Listening to her describe what was at stake, we took the first steps that would result in a wonderful binational process to save Hemingway's docu-

ments; preserve the architecture and physical structure of his home; restore his famous boat, the Pilar; and conserve and protect the contents of his home, including original furniture, clothing, a 9,000-volume library, original galley proofs and manuscripts, and over 4,000 photographs. Time and tropical climates are not kind to these delicate materials.

Partnering with the Social Science Research Council here in the United States, the Cuban Ministry of Culture, and the Cuban National Cultural Heritage Council, the CNPC, a plan of action was outlined to carry out a joint preservation project in Cuba and to conserve digitized and microfilm copies of all documents located in Hemingway's home to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum and to the Cuban National Cultural Heritage Council.

In 2002, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Eric Hershberg with the Social Science Research Council; Dr. Marta Arjona Perez of the CNPC; and witnessed by Frank and Jenny Phillips; Sandra Spanier with Pennsylvania State University and general editor of the Hemingway Letters Project; Sean, Angela, and Hilary Hemingway, who are the grandson, daughter-in-law, and niece of Ernest Hemingway; President Fidel Castro; and myself. Dozens of Cubans and Americans attended the signing, including my wife, Lisa.

Since then, scores of Cubans and Americans have worked together to make the dream of preserving this priceless legacy of Ernest Hemingway a reality.

□ 1315

This includes officials at the State Department, at the Commerce Department, and at the Department of the Treasury in both the Bush and Obama administrations who recognized the importance to America and the world in saving Hemingway's cultural history in Cuba and helped the project navigate the complicated requirements of U.S. regulations and license applications.

I would especially like to note and thank the many Cuban cultural officials and preservation, architectural, museum, and technical experts who made this dream come true. And I apologize if I leave anyone out.

I would like to begin with Cuban President Fidel Castro, whose unconditional support was essential to moving this project forward, as well as Josefina Vidal during her service at the Cuban Interests Section here in Washington and later, following her return to Havana.

I want to highlight the role of then-Minister of Culture, the iconic Abel Prieto, who was such an enthusiastic and encouraging voice when we first began reaching out to Cuban officials in 2002, as well as his successors, Rafael Bernal and the current Minister of Culture, Julian Gonzalez Toledo.

Central to the success of the restoration and preservation of Hemingway's house, grounds, and its contents are:

Marta Arjona Perez, now deceased, who was the visionary voice on the project when she was president of the Cuban National Cultural Heritage Council, the CNPC;

Gladys Collazo Usallan, who is the current president of the CNPC, as well as her predecessors Manuel Palacios Soto and Margarita Ruiz Brandi;

Nestor Garciaga, vice president of the CNPC and chief conservator of the Hemingway papers;

Gladys Rodriguez Ferrero, long associated with the Hemingway collection and buildings and the former director of The Finca Vigia Museum, has been one of the most influential voices and actors in the preservation and restoration projects;

Ada Rosa Alfonso, the current director of The Finca Vigia Museum, and Isabel Ferrero, the current deputy director of the museum;

Architect Enrique Hernandez Castillo;

Structural engineer Livan Yanes Diaz;

Historic preservation architects Fernando Sanchez Rodriguez and Marco Antonio Vidal Garcia;

Conservators Elisa Serrano Gonzalez, Liabys Alfonso Perez, Rosalba Diaz Quintana, and Roberto Abaen Siglen;

Arborist Rafael Ibanez San Miguel and Manuel Valle Lopez from the Institute of Forestry Research.

Their leadership, participation, expertise, vision, and generosity have been the essential heart of this successful collaboration.

I know I speak for many Americans when I say that we share their pride and joy in having participated day by day in the restoration and preservation of Hemingway's legacy in Cuba.

I count each of them as a valued colleague and as a friend, and I feel honored to have had the privilege, even in a small way, of having worked with them on this historic project.

Initially known as the Hemingway Preservation Foundation, the nonprofit Finca Vigia Foundation has been the critical coordinating agent of U.S. professionals and technical experts who have contributed their expertise, skills, time, and passion to this major preservation undertaking.

Since 2004, the Foundation has harnessed the talents, skill, and collaboration of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Social Science Research Council, Mystic Seaport, and the Northeast Document Conservation Center to create teams of engineers and architects, of preservationists and document conservators, and of botanists, builders, and photographers to:

Architecturally restore and preserve Hemingway's home to its 1950s splendor;

Restore Hemingway's famous yacht, the Pilar;

Conserve and digitize more than 10,000 documents, 4,000 photographs, and 5 rare Hemingway scrapbooks;