

*Ranking Member Engel Remarks
Argentina Caucus Launch
January 9, 2018
2200 Rayburn*

- Thanks so much for that kind introduction. With all of the turmoil at home and abroad these days, it feels nice to kick off 2018 with the launch of the Argentina Caucus. What a positive way to start off the new year.
- Thank you to Jane Harman and the Woodrow Wilson Center not only for hosting tonight's event but also for all you do day in and day out to provide sound guidance to policymakers across the ideological spectrum.
- And it's such a pleasure to join my friend Congressman McCaul as a co-chair of the Caucus. As Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee and a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. McCaul has a great deal to offer in moving the U.S. – Argentine relationship forward.
- I also am extremely grateful to my colleagues from the Argentine Chamber of Deputies for coming to Washington at a less than ideal time weather-wise. It probably would be much more enjoyable for us to be meeting in Buenos Aires right now.
- Since my time as Chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, I have advocated for exploring the untapped potential of the U.S. – Argentina relationship. I saw this potential firsthand when I led official delegations to the country in 2008 and 2010.
- Our countries are natural partners. We both have highly educated populations, diverse economies and vast natural resources.
- With the election of President Macri in late 2015, the opportunity to deepen the U.S. – Argentina partnership was finally in reach once again.
- In March of 2016, all eyes were on President Obama as he became the first president since Calvin Coolidge to visit Cuba. I accompanied the President on this trip, and it certainly was a historic visit.
- **But**, the press hardly paid any attention to the second leg of the President's trip which was to Buenos Aires.
- In visiting Argentina, President Obama revitalized the U.S. – Argentine relationship.
- And let's face it, no matter what your views are on Cuba, the U.S. economic possibilities in Cuba barely register when compared to our potential in Argentina.
- Argentina has the third-largest economy in Latin America, after only Brazil and Mexico, with a \$545 billion GDP in 2016.

- Here in Congress, there has been overwhelming bipartisan support for an enhanced relationship with Argentina.
- In April, Congressman Sires authored a resolution reaffirming the U.S. – Argentina partnership which passed the House of Representatives unanimously.
- And I was pleased to join Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi in meeting with President Macri in the Capitol last year. The Senate leadership hosted a similar meeting.
- So on Capitol Hill, there's a clear recognition of the need to work more closely with our friends in Argentina. And the launch of the Argentina Caucus allows us to formalize our legislature to legislature relationship.
- **But** now comes the hard part.
- From a congressional standpoint, we need to “put some meat on the bones” of our relationship. We can't just continue to come together time and time again to reaffirm our admiration for one another.
- Let's start digging in on some of the real issues that our Congresses are addressing, from the crisis in Venezuela to cybersecurity to job creation in both countries.
- So, I look to all of you here tonight to join Chairman McCaul and me in ensuring that the Argentina Caucus moves our bilateral relationship forward.
- Thank you again for being here tonight. *Muchas gracias a todos.*