

*Chairman McCaul's Remarks as Prepared*

*Argentina Caucus Launch*

*January 9, 2018*

*2200 Rayburn*

Thank you to everyone in attendance tonight to celebrate the launch of the U.S. – Argentina Caucus.

I would first like to offer a special thanks to my former colleague and friend, Congresswoman Jane Harman, for taking time to be here with us. Also to the Wilson Center for both sponsoring this event, and for the excellent work they do in support of the U.S.-Argentine relationship.

I would also like extend a special thanks to Chairwoman Schmidt-Liermann, Chair of the Foreign Affairs and Worship Committee, and her delegation for travelling all the way from Argentina to be here with us this evening. To the Argentine delegation here in attendance, it is an honor to welcome you to Washington, D.C.

With the temperature being as low as it is though, I would rather be in Buenos Aires if I were you.

All joking aside, Argentina is a beautiful country with a beautiful culture.

And as we all know, the relationship between the United States and Argentina has not always been sunshine and rainbows.

In fact, it has historically been one of cautious embrace, suffering from periods of strain and mistrust mixed with periods of cooperation.

But, I think we can agree we have more that naturally unites us than separates us, and before us now is a special moment in our relationship.

As such, we must put aside our differences, embrace our commonalities, and build upon them in a way that enhances our bilateral relationship for years to come.

The critical role Argentina plays in Latin America is undeniable.

As a major non-NATO ally, strong member at the Organization of American States, and a signatory to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the 1988 United Nations Drug Conventions, and the Convention against Corruption, Argentina continues to serve as a leader in the region.

In addition, Argentina has undertaken substantial economic reforms that have not gone unnoticed here in the United States.

In fact, in response to these far-reaching reforms, the House of Representatives passed a resolution commending the Argentine government for its accomplishments.

This serves as a great foundation for building and strengthening our relationship, and addressing the many shared challenges that lie ahead of us.

As we confront these problems head on, Congressman Engle and I believe we must have a platform in Congress to implement our shared vision which is why we joined forces to create the first-ever Congressional Argentina Caucus.

This Caucus will serve as a mouthpiece for engagement between our legislatures, a tool to help educate members of the U.S. Congress of the importance of strong U.S.-Argentine relations, and a sounding board for dialogue on issues of bilateral importance.

Because we must continue to work together to combat transnational criminals who wish to exploit our borders – trafficking poisonous drugs, chemicals, and humans for profit.

We must work together to prevent money laundering and illicit financing in the hemisphere.

We must work together to strengthen our strong economic and trading relationship.

And most importantly, we must work together to defend democracy in the region, especially in Venezuela where it is under attack from the dictatorial rule of President Maduro.

Through a better understanding of our commonalities and differences, and a commitment to working together to solve our shared challenges, I am convinced, through this caucus, the United States and Argentina will form an unshakable bond that will result in a more secure, prosperous, and democratic hemisphere.

Again, to all here tonight, welcome, and thank you for being here for this special occasion.

I would now like pass it off to Congressman Eliot Engel, Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and co-chair of the Argentina Caucus, who would like to say a few words.