

*Civics is all around us. There is a lot to know about the government and how “We the People” interact with the government and each other. Let’s help each other expand our civic literacy.*

## Historical Context

Whereas the Congress of the United States of America, by an Act approved March 2, 1801, provided as follows:

Provided further, That in fulfillment of the said declaration contained in the joint resolution approved, fourth, eighth, twelfth, and twenty eighth, entitled "For the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba, and to withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba, and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land

Por tanto el Congreso de los Estados Unidos de America dispuso, en virtud de una Ley aprobada en Marzo 2 de 1801, lo siguiente:

Se dispuso ademas, Que en cumplimiento de la declaracion contenida en la resolucion conjunta, acordada en 26 de Abril de 1801, bajo el epigrafe "Por la reconocion de la independencia del pueblo de Cuba, exigiendo que el Gobierno de España renuncie a su autoridad y gobierno en la Isla de Cuba y que retire de Cuba y de las aguas Cubanas sus fuerzas de mar y tierra; y ademas, al Presidente de los Estados Unidos que use para llevar a efecto

Approved on May 22, 1903, the Platt Amendment, named for [Senator Orville Platt](#), permitted extensive U.S. involvement in Cuban international and domestic affairs for the enforcement of Cuban independence. Stipulations included:

- ## The Platt Amendment Today

The United States used its authority under the Platt Amendment to intervene in Cuban affairs on four separate occasions in the 20th century (1906, 1912, 1917, 1920). The Amendment was eventually repealed under President Franklin Roosevelt's [Good Neighbor Policy](#) towards Latin America in the 1930s, however Guantánamo Bay remains an operational U.S. naval base to this day. While the surrounding circumstances and the nations involved may differ, the Platt Amendment serves as a historical parallel to current debates about U.S. military presence and influence in countries such as Venezuela and Greenland, all highlighting tensions between great power strategic interests and the [autonomy/sovereignty](#) of smaller nations.

**To Think and To Do:** Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger believed, “No foreign policy—no matter how ingenious—has any chance of success if it is born in the minds of a few and carried in the hearts of none.” What did he mean by this statement? How might his quote apply to the Platt Amendment and foreign policy ideas debated today?



**Lou Frey  
Institute**

