

June 14, 2017

Open Letter to President Donald J. Trump:

Support Legislation to Ease the Sanctions Against Cuba

CC: Congressional Leadership

Dear President Trump,

We, the undersigned free market organizations representing millions of Americans, write in strong support of easing trade restrictions with the Republic of Cuba. Representatives Crawford, Sanford, McGovern, Emmer, and Castor have all introduced legislation that would gradually remove trade barriers between the U.S. and Cuba and have significant economic benefits for America in the long-run, while opening a new pathway to effecting change in Cuba. **The proposals solidify a growing agricultural trade relationship, increase the freedom of Americans to travel to Cuba, and remove the remaining constraints on private-sector industries doing business in Cuba.**

H.R. 525, the Cuba Agricultural Exports Act, would remove the remaining restrictions on farm exports by allowing Cuba to access credit when purchasing agricultural products from America. H.R. 351, The Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act, restores the ability of Americans to travel to the only nation they are currently prohibited from visiting. H.R. 442, The Cuba Trade Act, lifts the rest of the embargo.

The United States prospers by engaging with the world. Access to foreign markets unleashes domestic productivity and gives workers a greater range of employment opportunities. Likewise, Americans should be allowed to travel to other nations and serve as diplomats who can spread our soft power abroad.

Scaling back the decades-long embargo with Cuba would be a needed boost to the American economy with a nation that had historically strong ties with the United States. **Estimates predict that the agricultural sector alone could see \$365 million**

in additional sales to Cuba and support 6,000 American jobs. More importantly, by increasing trade with the United States, more and more Cubans and Cuban government officials will encounter the infectious spirit of the free market.

Establishing free trade with Cuba is not an endorsement of a communist dictatorship. Rather, restrictions on trade violate the rights of American citizens without any policy benefit.

Crucially, H.R. 442 enforces a

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Prohibition On Foreign Assistance And Financing Of Trade With Cuba.—
Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the United States
Government may not provide any foreign assistance to Cuba or any
financial assistance, loans, loan guarantees, extension of credit, or other
financing for exports to Cuba.

Violation of political rights by the Cuban government deserve strong
condemnation. But today there is a glimmer of hope and an openness to new
ideas. The Cuban government has taken some steps towards supporting local
entrepreneurship and attracting more U.S foreign direct investment. Today, the
sanctions are a hindrance to the opening of Cuba. Instead of spurring change, the
sanctions now provide the regime with an easy scapegoat for their own failed
policies, obscuring the real source of hardship by placing blame on the United
States. Gradually ending the embargo can help to dispel the fiction that America is
responsible for the Cubans' plight.

Engagement with other communist regimes has proven that American influence
grows as trade develops. Countries like Vietnam, Burma, Laos and most famously
China prove that previously hostile countries can move in a better direction when
encouraged to trade with free nations. National security would greatly benefit
from trade and travel relations with Cuba that will improve stability in the region.

Conversely, reversing the recent improvements in America-Cuba trade and travel
would put thousands of U.S. jobs at risk. Your successful presidential campaign
was correct in stressing the need to boost the job market; putting up more trade
barriers runs counter to that goal. Congress must act to continue economic gains.

**We urge you and every member of Congress to support proposals to increase
travel, ease of business, and economic ties with Cuba.**

Sincerely,

Grover G. Norquist
President,
Americans for Tax Reform

Norm Singleton
President,
Campaign for Liberty

Jeffrey Mazzella
President
Center for Individual Freedom

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