

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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August 24, 2010

The Honorable Howard Berman  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Berman and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, urges you to schedule a mark-up of H.R. 4645, the "Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act." The bill would expand the scope of U.S. economic engagement with Cuba with the expectation that greater commercial and people-to-people contacts would promote a transition to democracy and full civil liberties.

For five decades, unilateral sanctions, including a ban on travel, have allowed the Cuban regime to blame its own economic mismanagement on Washington. Rather than encouraging Cuba to democratize, these measures have arguably helped prop up the regime. It is doubtful the Cuban dictatorship could have withstood a half century of free trade, free markets, and free enterprise. It is time to end the unproductive preoccupation with an aging and moribund communist regime, and begin to lay the groundwork for a U.S. role in the future of Cuba. Recent moves in both Havana and Washington indicate that the time is right to adjust U.S. policy toward Cuba in favor of a strategy that will encourage positive change on the island.

Getting U.S.-Cuba policy right matters, because the U.S. response will send a signal to the wider world about American values, including helping neighbors who have suffered oppression and poverty under a callous dictator. U.S. policy should consider strategies that are more likely to advance democracy, the rule of law, and a brighter future for the people of Cuba and bring commercial benefits to the United States, rather than focus on how increased tourism and sales to the island will impact the Cuban regime.

Because of the need to reform U.S. policy toward Cuba, the Chamber urges the Committee to report this legislation to the full House swiftly and without amendment so that the House can consider and approve this measure in the very near term.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten

Cc: The Members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs