

2016 CALLS TO ACTION

US Women & Cuba Collaboration | womenandcuba.org

Our mission is to build a strong US women's movement dedicated to ending the US government blockade of Cuba and to creating mutually beneficial US-Cuba relations; our work is rooted in the concept of universal human rights, racial and economic justice, and women's rights.

Lobby Congress to pass legislation to end the US economic and travel embargo against Cuba. The unjust travel ban and embargo can be ended by Congressional action to move the following bills into law: the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act of 2015 (HR 664) and the Cuba Trade Act of 2015 (HR3238) in the House of Representatives; the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act of 2015 (S 299) and the Cuba Trade Act of 2015 (S 1543) in the Senate. Call your members of Congress today to urge their co-sponsorship and support of these bills. (See the lawg.org website for suggested talking points, or just call your elected representatives and ask them to please support all legislation to end the embargo on Cuba.) All Cubans are now free to travel and we believe travel restrictions for US citizens violate our constitutional right to travel and to experience other nations for ourselves. We believe that a US policy of isolating Cuba should be replaced by a policy of engaging Cuba so that citizens of both countries might experience the realities of one another's cultures and accomplishments. As traditional caretakers of the family, Cuban women in particular have suffered both in the US and in Cuba as a result of travel bans and the embargo. | lawg.org

Ask President Obama to take all of the actions within his executive powers to move forward normalized relations between the US and Cuba. These actions include setting a short timetable for the closing and return of the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base to the citizens of Cuba, lifting the US ban on imports from Cuba, allowing use of dollars in international and US banking transactions, authorizing direct export of US products to Cuba, allowing US companies to invest in Cuba, and allowing US citizens to receive medical treatment in Cuba. Additionally, President Obama should provide leadership to end the Cuban Adjustment Act and to end funding that is intended to undermine Cuban sovereignty to organizations such as USAID and Radio Marti.

Understand that literacy is a women's issue, in the US and globally, because it affects women out of proportion in relation to men for reasons that are both social and economic. Both girls and boys drop out of school, but girls sometimes have added issues of pregnancy, marriage, and greater impacts of sexual abuse and family violence. In adult literacy programs, women too often have added burdens of unmet childcare needs, complex responsibilities to various family members, and partners who actively object to their interest in literacy and independence. There are obvious links between the obstacles women face as learners and the obstacles they face as they work to lift themselves and their children out of poverty. With literacy, poverty decreases; health and wellness improves; employment, productivity, and income rises; parental involvement with education increases; crime and incarceration rates decrease; community volunteerism and civic engagement, including voting, improves. Speak out against Head Start cuts affecting 57,000 US children. | www.sil.org/literacy/wom_lit.htm; national-coalition-literacy.org; unesco.org; litworld.org

Ratify CEDAW, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, with no RUDs (restrictive "reservations, understandings, declarations"). In league with a multitude of progressive organizations, the US Women and Cuba Collaboration calls for the long-overdue ratification by the US Senate of CEDAW/The Women's Treaty. Since its adoption by the UN General Assembly in 1979, for the first time the world has an international treaty recognizing discrimination against women as a human rights violation, a treaty that has been signed and ratified by a majority of the world's countries. The US is one of only eight countries that have failed to ratify CEDAW (in the company of Iran, Palau, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Tonga). President Carter signed CEDAW in 1980 making the US the only country to have signed, but not ratified, the treaty. Supported by President Obama, CEDAW needs to be sent to him for his signature by a two-thirds vote of the US Senate. Call your senators and take the CEDAW pledge. Join growing efforts by women around the country to advocate for local legislation to implement the principles of CEDAW in their cities by undertaking a gender analysis of government programs, policies and appointments. | **Cities for CEDAW**; un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw; Cedaw2015.org