

BARBARA LEE

13TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND POLICY COMMITTEE

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and Related Agencies

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COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET



**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-0509**

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The Honorable Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

November 8, 2013

Dear President Obama:

I want to thank you for the positive actions you have taken to direct our Cuba policy toward reconciliation and normalization. Your decision to lift some restrictions on Cuban Americans and to open the door to improved lines of communications was met with celebrations in the streets of Miami and Havana.

As you move forward in rethinking the failed Cold War era policies on Cuba, I strongly urge you to move quickly and decisively to bring real change to the failed unilateral embargo that continues to isolate the United States from our allies internationally. I believe that you are in a unique position to set the stage for an open and honest dialogue with the Cuban government—one that will be mutually beneficial for not only the United States and Cuba, but the region as a whole.

Given that you have expressed your desire to speak to Cuba and other nations as equals and without precondition, we believe that there are three immediate steps that the Administration can take to reduce the adversarial stance of the United States against the Cuban government and signal a return to a real diplomacy. These steps include: (1) removing Cuba from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, (2) lifting all restrictions on licensed travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba, and, (3) calling for direct, high-level dialogue with the Cuban government.

It is my hope that the United States can move quickly to normalize relations with our nearest Caribbean neighbor and I believe that taking these actions will remove many of the institutional impediments that stand in the way of dramatically improving the bi-lateral relations between Cuba and the United States.

It is long past time to try a new approach, and the American people support and encourage new steps by the United States towards an improved and more cooperative relationship between our nation and Cuba. As such, I'd like to bring to your attention the attached letter about U.S.-Cuba policy, signed by 55 U.S. humanitarian, academic, religious, business, and cultural institutions, both national and regional.

We will not be able to put aside 50 years of differences if we continue to hang on to an outdated and ineffective Cold War era policy. I look forward to working closely with the State Department and the Administration to improve our relations, not only with Cuba, but with every nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barbara" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Lee".

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary of State John Kerry