

# CALL FOR RIGHT TO TRAVEL AND NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND CUBA

## 1. RESIST EROSION TO OUR LIMITED RIGHT TO TRAVEL TO CUBA!

Despite popular belief, the US government significantly restricts the right of US citizens to travel to Cuba. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the US Treasury Department enforces the provisions of the “Trading with the Enemy Act” which is the official trade and travel policy towards Cuba. Passed in 1961 after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, this act prevents US travel to Cuba except for a limited number of legally allowable conditions. In March of 2003, the second Bush regime began efforts to eliminate the “people-to-people” travel provisions which would end 70% of the current legal travel to Cuba.

### ACTIONS:

- Please send letters to the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control before May 23 to tell them that people-to-people exchange is vital. The new regulations will drastically reduce the number of US citizens who are able to have direct contact with Cuban citizens. Ask the Treasury Department to rescind this change in regulations. Send your letters to:  
Chief of Records  
ATTN: Request for Comments  
Office of Foreign Assets Control  
Department of the Treasury  
15090 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20220
- Also send copies of your letter to John Snow, Secretary of the Treasury Department, and to Colin Powell, Secretary of State. For more information, addresses, and talking points for letter content, go to the Latin American Working Group web site [www.lawg.org](http://www.lawg.org).

## 2. SUPPORT PROPOSED SENATE LEGISLATION: *THE FREEDOM TO TRAVEL TO CUBA ACT, S. 950*

Recent events prove once again that our policy of isolating Cuba—economically and diplomatically—strips the United States of our ability to influence events at critical moments. The policy of the embargo has been a notorious failure for 44 years. It punishes US citizens by curtailing our constitutional rights to travel and by foreclosing trade opportunities for US air carriers and other US businesses. Of more importance, the policy hurts average Cuban citizens, whose living standards and opportunities for human rights would improve with a policy of open travel and trade between the United States and Cuba.

*The Freedom To Travel to Cuba Act, 2003*, was introduced by Senator Michael Enzi, (R-WY) and co-sponsors: Republicans Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, Larry Craig of Idaho, and Democrats Max Baucus of Montana, Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, Mark Dayton of Minnesota, Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, and Tim Johnson of South Dakota. This bill is a clear demonstration of solidarity with the Cuban people at a critical juncture in their political history. Legalizing travel to Cuba is needed, now more than ever, so that engagement with Cuba can replace the isolation of Cuba, and so that US and Cuban citizens can experience the realities of one another’s cultures for themselves. Passage of this bill is imperative to preserve and defend basic constitutional rights we have as free citizens to travel and experience other nations of the world for ourselves. This right is fundamental to a healthy democracy.

Leading Cuban American organizations give solid endorsement to recent legislation proposed by the Senate Cuba Working Group to open travel of US citizens to Cuba. Similar bills to end funding for the travel ban have passed the House of Representatives in each of the past three Congressional sessions. A partial list of organizations led by Cuban Americans endorsing Senate bill to end the travel ban to Cuba: Cuban American Defense League, The Time is Now Coalition, US/Cuba Legal Forum, Cuban American Alliance, Cambio Cubano, Cuban Committee for Democracy, Fundación Amistad, The Caribbean American Children Foundation, Puentes Cubanos, Alianza Martiana, Tampa-Cuba Alliance, Asociacion Martiana, Cuban American Democratic Council, The Dante Fascell Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Alliance for Responsible Cuba Policy, Madison-Camaguey Sister City Association, and West Coast Cuban American Alliance.

**ACTIONS:**

- Call, write, fax, and/or visit your senators! Contact both their local district and DC offices. Tell them that you support this bill, ask them to support Senate Bill S.950, the *Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act 2003*, and ask them to sign on as a co-sponsor.
- Make a petition, collecting signatures with addresses from everyone who supports freedom to travel, irregardless of their interest in Cuba. Then deliver the petition to your senators' offices. Keep copies for further actions.
- Contact your local American Civil Liberties Union ([www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)) or National Lawyers Guild and hold a press conference with community leaders supporting this initiative. This bill preserves a fundamental freedom of our first Amendment.
- Write letters to the local papers praising this initiative, and ask local papers to write an editorial supporting this bill. They are quick to criticize Cuba's lack of rights; ask that they take a stand on protecting ours.
- Work to pass City Council (or county or state) resolutions supporting this bill.

**3. SUPPORT THE RIGHT OF CUBANS TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES**

Since the events of September 11, 2001, the right of Cubans to travel to the United States has been severely limited by the second Bush regime. Visas issues to Cubans by the US State Department have slowed to a trickle, including denying them to winners of the Latin Grammys! This is another critical way that people-to-people exchanges and the opportunity to hear about Cuban realities directly from Cuban people are being prevented. Currently, the US Women and Cuba Collaboration needs your help in obtaining permission for Cuban women to travel to participate in a presentation at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in New Orleans, to be followed by a speaking tour of the Southeastern US in late June of 2003.

**ACTION:**

- Letters of invitation and support are needed immediately to endorse the right of people in the US to hear from these Cuban women. For more details, please contact the Collaboration Project co-chairs listed below.

Website Resources: [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)  
(information about bills, contacting legislators)  
[www.lawg.org](http://www.lawg.org), [www.cubasolidarity.com](http://www.cubasolidarity.com), [www.cubacentral.com](http://www.cubacentral.com)  
(information about Cuban and Latin American issues)

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