



Latin
America
Working
Group

HAVE YOU TRAVELED TO CUBA?

SHOULDN'T ALL AMERICANS
BE ABLE TO TRAVEL LEGALLY TO CUBA?

IN JUNE 2004, the Bush Administration issued new regulations that further restrict travel and humanitarian aid to Cuba. Among other draconian measures, the new regulations restrict family visits to once every three years with no exceptions; and college study abroad programs are now almost completely banned. The new regulations essentially end legal travel to Cuba. The reality is that this policy shows a side of the United States that does not reflect our values of justice and freedom.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO:

- **SIGN UP FOR THE LATIN AMERICA WORKING GROUP'S** Cuba Policy Email Network for timely email updates and action alerts regarding Cuba policy. You can sign up online at www.lawg.org/tools/sign_up_for_e-alerts.htm. You'll receive regular updates and ideas for action.
- **CALL OR EMAIL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATORS** with the following message: "I am your constituent and would like to voice my opposition to restrictions for U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba. Freedom of travel is a right of all American citizens. After 40-plus years of a harsh and failed policy, it's time for a change." Tip: Ask to speak to the foreign policy aide and keep trying until you are able to talk with that person. For thoughts on possible email text, see the sample on the reverse side.

For phone numbers, call the US Capitol switchboard at 202.224.3121 and ask to be transferred to your representative's or senator's office. Or, you may call them in their state or district office; phone numbers may be found on their websites by visiting www.senate.gov or www.house.gov. Email addresses are available on their websites as well.
- **WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OR AN OP-ED** for your local newspaper. Share your convictions on the freedom to travel to Cuba with the editorial board of your local paper and with the readers of the paper. If you have been to Cuba, your opinions have more weight than most. For more tips on writing a letter to the editor, see the back of this sheet.
- **SIGN A PETITION AT CUBACENTRAL.COM.** At this website, you can sign petitions to various officials, read about people who have traveled to Cuba and are facing prosecution and fines, and see some of the latest news articles on the Cuba policy debate.

Remember, elected officials listen closely to those whose votes elect them. You can make a difference. Make your voice heard!

Latin America Working Group

• 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Box 15 • Washington, DC 20002 • Tel: 202.546.7010 •

WRITING A LETTER TO CONGRESS OR THE EDITOR

Sample letter for supporting an end to the ban on travel to Cuba

If you choose to write instead of calling or visiting your member of Congress, below are some sample paragraphs which you could adapt to your own letter. Personalized letters have the most impact, so put your concerns to your senators or representative in your own words. Letters should be short, and be sure to include your address and email so that you can get a response.

Addresses:

Representatives

The Honorable (full name)
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Senators

The Honorable (full name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator/Representative _____,

As a constituent, I strongly urge you to take action to remove all restrictions on travel to Cuba. Freedom to travel is a basic right of all Americans; the current policy violates that right. In past years amendments restoring that fundamental right have passed the House of Representatives and Senate with overwhelming majorities. I applaud those efforts and urge you to co-sponsor or support any legislation this year that eases or removes the ban on travel. I also urge you to make sure that any legislation which is approved is not removed in conference.

In polls, a majority of American people, including Cuban Americans, repeatedly support an end to the ban on travel to Cuba. I urge you to respect these opinions and add your voice to the voices of many others calling for an end to this failed policy. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your name/address

~~For further talking points or to learn more about your member's position, call the LAWG at (202) 546-7010 or send an email to lawg@lawg.org.

Tips for letters to the editor:

~~Your newspaper's letters page should give you an email address or fax number to use.

~~Your own words, written from the heart, are always best.

~~Brevity is the soul of wit.

~~The key to publication is to pounce on something specific you've seen in the newspaper — especially an editorial or op-ed article. Try to cite a specific article when you write.

~~Be sure to include your name and address, and especially your phone number when submitting your letter. Editors need to call you to verify authorship before they can print your letter. They don't print your phone number or address.

~~One of your first sentences should contain your conclusion
