November 18, 2026

Dear Minority Leader Jeffries and Ranking Members Meeks and McGovern,

We, the undersigned organizations, are deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian crisis in Cuba that has been sharply exacerbated by ongoing U.S. hostilities against the country — in particular, the de facto oil blockade that has compounded the harm of decades of far-reaching sanctions, commonly referred to as the U.S. embargo. We urge you to immediately announce plans to call a vote on the privileged resolution H.Con.Res. 106 — Rep. Velázquez's Cuba War Powers Resolution — to end these unauthorized hostilities that are causing hardship and loss of life for Cuban civilians.

Cuba is suffering through a man-made economic and humanitarian catastrophe, caused in significant part by deliberate policy choices of the United States. Since January 2026, the Trump administration has imposed an oil blockade that has cut off the island from nearly all fuel imports, allowing only a single tanker to dock over the past seven months alongside minor U.S. sales that are wholly insufficient to sustain the country's economy and basic services. The consequences have been devastating and far-reaching, and the crisis is deepening. Cuba has endured at least seven nationwide grid collapses this year — at times leaving over nine million people without power, with outages stretching well beyond 20 hours in much of the country. Fuel shortages have stalled transportation, disrupted food and water supplies, and pushed a once-renowned universal health care system toward collapse and the rationing of care. Cuban civilians — including children — have lost their lives as a result. This lethal impact of sanctions is evidenced by the 148 percent increase in Cuba's infant mortality rate between 2018-2025 following the retightening of sanctions. This implies additional deaths of 1800 infants. The current oil blockade is a severe acceleration of the sanctions regime.

On August 6, a panel of UN experts condemned the recent escalation of U.S.sanctions against Cuba, warning that "the humanitarian consequences are already unfolding into a full-blown crisis, threatening the rights to health, to life, to food and to development," and that Cuba risks becoming a "silent Gaza" without humanitarian intervention. This is the consequence of a deliberate U.S. policy that seeks the collective punishment of a civilian population — falling hardest on the poor, pregnant women, children, and the elderly.

Under the War Powers Resolution of 1973, the President may not introduce U.S. forces into hostilities, or situations where hostilities are imminent, without congressional authorization. It is clear that a de facto fuel blockade enforced by military assets meets the definition of hostilities. In 1963, President Kennedy stated plainly that "to deny the oil [to Cuba] would require, of course, a blockade, and a blockade is an act of war." The U.N. Charter treats a blockade as a use of armed force, and the U.N. General Assembly's official "Definition of Aggression" identifies a blockade as an act of aggression. The deliberate deprivation of fuel to a civilian population also violates the 4th Geneva Convention's prohibition on collective punishment of civilians, and is therefore a war crime under this treaty, which the United States, along with all other UN member countries, has ratified. The executive cannot lawfully engage in these kinds of hostilities without obtaining the Congressional authorization required by the U.S. Constitution and the War Powers Act of 1973.

The American public is decisively against the ongoing hostilities against Cuba. Recent national polling finds that Americans oppose a U.S. war with Cuba by 64 percent to 15 percent — and among those who hold an opinion, opposition rises to roughly 81 percent. Another recent poll found that more Americans disapprove than approve of the oil blockade itself. In addition to the blockade, the Trump administration has engaged in a wide range of threats of further hostilities and violations of Cuba's sovereignty. Administration officials have signaled that military action to take control of the country remains an option, and in May 2026 the Justice Department indicted former Cuban leader Raúl Castro — a move widely understood as setting the stage for a possible capture operation, echoing the January 2026 raid that removed Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. These and other aggressive threats, including the continuous intensification of sanctions, represent an escalating pattern of hostility toward Cuba. Across the political spectrum, Americans do not want another regime change war, nor an open-ended, nation-building project abroad based on false pretenses — especially not when escalation risks exposing the United States to new national security risks, placing US servicemembers in harm's way, stoking regional instability, and becoming the latest chapter in a long history of harmful U.S. regional policies that have fueled mass migration to U.S. shores.

The Senate has already taken a strong stand on this issue, and the House should follow suit. During the debate around S.J.Res. 124, opponents did not defend military action against Cuba on its merits, but instead argued that U.S. actions were not "hostilities" because there have been no ground troops nor airstrikes. A bipartisan group of 47 senators rejected that reasoning and voted for the first time in history that a blockade enforced without a shot fired still constitutes hostilities under the War Powers Act. Despite falling short of the majority, this was among the strongest votes in Congressional history against the use of blockades, and one of the most important stands Congress has taken against U.S. economic sanctions toward Cuba in over six decades. The House should take a similarly forceful action at this crucial moment.

A vote should not have to wait for the new Congress to be seated. The Cuban people are suffering and dying, and cannot afford further months of inaction. In the midterm elections, US voters resoundingly rejected a foreign policy of war and domination, and made clear their desire for Congress to act forcefully to rein in the Trump administration. Holding the vote today would demonstrate that Democrats in the House of Representatives, like their counterparts in the Senate, have recognized the urgency of taking action to support the Cuban people, and would lay the foundation for an assertive agenda of peace, diplomacy, and respect for international law in the 120th Congress. Now is the time for decisive leadership.

Sincerely,

Action Corps
Afghans For A Better Tomorrow
Alianza Americas
Alliance of Baptists
Americans for Common Sense on Cuba (ACSC)
Alliance for Cuba Engagement and Respect (ACERE)
American Friends Service Committee
Building Relations with Cuban Labor

Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)
Center for International Policy Advocacy
Charity & Security Network (C&SN)
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America
Church World Service
Coalition for Peace Action
CODEPINK
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Region
Cuban Americans for Cuba (CA4C)
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress
Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution
Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)
Fund for Reconciliation and Development
Global Exchange
Global Health Partners
Indivisible
Just Foreign Policy
Justice is Global
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Massachusetts Peace Action
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Migrant Roots Media
Minnesota Cuba Committee
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Nurses United
NH Peace Action
Pax Christi USA
Peace Action
Pittsburgh-Matanzas Sister Cities Partnership
Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
RootsAction
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team
Solidarity Committee of the Americas (SCOTA) - Minnesota
Task Force on the Americas
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
United Church of Christ
WILPF Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance Committee
Win Without War
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)