

May 22, 2012

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton  
United States Department of State  
Mr. Peter Brennan  
Office of Cuban Affairs  
Department of State

Dear Secretary Clinton and Mr. Brennan:

Your recent denial of visas to eleven of the Cuban scholars scheduled to participate in the academic exchanges during the Latin American Studies Association Conference (LASA) in San Francisco, underscores the irrationality of United States policy towards academics from Cuba.

The lack of criteria for the denial of these visas, even in cases of academics who have been granted visas and have traveled to the United States in the past only points to the fact that these denials are arbitrary and politically motivated. Clearly a more rational approach is called for in our relations with Cuba in general and, more specifically in our dealings with academic exchanges which should never be used as political tools.

The Foundation for Normalization of US/Cuba Relations strenuously objects to both the recent denial of these visas to Cuban academics as well as recent moves by the Treasury Department to tighten restrictions on People-to-People engagements. The recent People to People trips have resulted in positive steps on both sides of the Florida Straits. The Obama administration has committed to a program of increased contact and engagement with the Cuban people and these actions are counterproductive to this policy. Time has proven that isolation and confrontation do not produce any positive results.

Let's continue to engage the Cuban people so that we may move forward in our relations in a positive and constructive manner..

Sincerely,

Executive Committee of **FORNORM** (Foundation for Normalization of US/Cuba Relations)

**Elena R Freyre**  
**Amaury Cruz**  
**Julio Ruiz**  
**Isidro Borja**  
**Antonio Zamora**

**Xiomara Levy**  
**Max Lesnik**  
**Ramon Coll**  
**Richard Sablon**  
**Rosa Reyes**  
**Luis Vazquez**

**Contact: Elena Freyre**  
**cubaid7@bellsouth.net**  
**786-683-8241**