

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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September 10, 2019

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports the bipartisan S. 2303, "Freedom for Americans to Travel to Cuba Act of 2019." Thank you for introducing this important legislation.

Cuba is one of only two countries in the world where the U.S. government restricts travel by American citizens. This bill and its House counterpart (H.R. 3960, introduced by Representatives James P. McGovern and Tom Emmer) would remove barriers preventing American citizens from traveling freely to Cuba as well as remove restrictions on transactions associated with such travel. It would remove restrictions introduced in 1996 and 2000 and address regulatory changes in June 2019 that further restricted legal U.S. citizen travel.

The private sector has long supported engagement with Cuba because we believe free enterprise can have a powerful and positive impact on society. The Chamber and its U.S.-Cuba Business Council (USCBC) continue to believe that U.S. citizens and businesses are the best ambassadors for the ideals of freedom and free enterprise, and measures restricting the freedom to travel undercut their impact.

As you and your colleagues witnessed during the Chamber's U.S.-Cuba Business Summit in May, there is keen interest in the private sector and among other stakeholders for greater engagement between U.S. and Cuba. We believe there is a strong case to be made that additional people-to-people contacts could lead to Cuba becoming more open and democratic.

Lifting the travel ban could help thousands of Cubans improve their standard of living and facilitate their economic independence from the state. Cuba's small entrepreneurs, artists, taxi drivers, restaurateurs, and bed & breakfast operators would benefit from an influx of American visitors. The growth of the Cuban private sector in recent years is a testament to the resourcefulness and desire the Cuban people have to create better lives for themselves and their families. Lifting this travel restriction would allow the American people and businesses to spread the values of entrepreneurship and free enterprise to this expanding community.

The Chamber appreciates your leadership on this important issue and looks forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact this legislation.

Sincerely,



Neil Bradley