

**The Alliance of Baptists Gathered in Annual Convocation at
Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, CA, July 31, 2010**

A Resolution on Evolving U.S.-Cuba Policies

Because of our partnership with the “Fraternidad de Iglesias Bautista de Cuba”, our Christian convictions and our United States citizenship, we continue to be deeply concerned by our government’s ineffective and inhumane policies toward Cuba which have existed for over 50 years. We celebrate the positive changes in recent months on both sides of the Straits of Florida.

President Obama’s easing the travel restrictions for Cuban-Americans to travel to Cuba once every 12 months with unlimited stays and calls for signs of good faith from the Cuban government have been met with relocation of prisoners to locations nearer their homes and families and by the release of some 52 prisoners held for political reasons. The U.S. House of Representatives’ Agriculture Committee passed H.R. 4645 *Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act*, by a vote of 25-20, sending it towards a vote by the full House. In addition to trade export improvements, this legislation would remove prohibitions on travel to Cuba for all Americans. While we take heart at these encouraging developments, they constitute but small steps toward amending past mistakes.

To President Obama, we urge the following:

- Honor your campaign pledge to provide general licenses for unlimited travel by Cuban-Americans.
- Sign into law legislation restoring, for all Americans, the right to travel to Cuba immediately upon passage of the Congress.
- Remove restrictions on Cuban-American remittances.
- Instruct the Treasury Department to ease restrictions on non-tourist, people-to-people exchanges, particularly for educational, humanitarian, cultural and religious purposes.
- Continue your administration’s thorough review of U.S.-Cuba policies, including the trade embargo and its destructive impact on both countries.

To Congress, we urge the following:

- Pass, without amendment, the bipartisan bill H.R. 4645 that lifts all restrictions on travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba and enhances exports to Cuba..

To the Alliance and all of its partners, we urge the following:

- Contact your members of Congress and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 4645 and to vote for its passage. For details about this bill and actions you can take, contact one of the Alliance's partner organizations, The Latin America Working Group, at www.lawg.org.

With this statement, the members of the Alliance present at the Annual Alliance Convocation at Asilomar Conference Grounds invites its board, staff, affiliated congregations and individuals to actively work to encourage further positive acts toward reconciliation between the United States and Cuba. By so doing, we stand alongside numerous other religious bodies and humanitarian organizations insisting on policies that heal the wounds of U.S.-Cuba history and move both nations forward. By so doing, we honor our own covenant to join God's call "to repentance and faith, reconciliation and hope, social and economic justice."*

*From the Alliance of Baptists Covenant.

Many thanks to Stan Hasteley for his assistance in the preparation of this statement.