

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

***Join Cuban Hunger Striker Guillermo Fariñas  
In His Call to End the U.S. Travel Ban on Cuba  
Cosponsor & Support H.R. 4645***

July 22, 2010

Dear Colleague,

A great deal has been taking place in Cuba recently.

More and more, political dissidents and political prisoners have raised their voices urging changes in U.S. policy – including lifting the ban on legal travel to Cuba for all Americans – because existing approaches have failed and because human rights and democratization would move along faster if the United States were more engaged and less isolated from Cuba.

Guillermo Fariñas, who recently ended a 134-day hunger strike dedicated to improving conditions for sick prisoners in Cuban jails, is one inspiring example of this change.

Fariñas stopped taking food and water the day after an earlier hunger striker, Orlando Zapata Tamayo, died after fasting for more than 80 days. He pledged not to take sustenance until Cuba's government took action on 26 of the most infirm prisoners. Thanks to an agreement negotiated between Cuba's government and the Cuban Catholic Church, 52 prisoners are to be freed, and Fariñas, who was near death, is eating and drinking fluids again.

Days after Fariñas ended his fast, he gave an interview to El Pais, one of Spain's major newspapers:

*Fariñas is of the opinion that the U.S. should seize the current situation to "move" and authorize the travel of American tourists. In his view, this would be the best service for changes in Cuba. "The visit of millions of U.S. citizens without a doubt would change this country, as it was transformed by the arrival of the exiles in 1979."*

Fariñas is not alone. Scores of Cuba's most prominent current advocates for political and social change on the island have endorsed legislation in the U.S. Congress to end the travel ban and to increase food exports to the island.

For decades, U.S. policy toward Cuba has put political prisoners at the center of our demands for change by Cuba's government. When the very people in whose name we've made U.S. policy call for changes in that policy, shouldn't we listen and respond accordingly?

Ending the travel ban and putting more food on the tables of Cuban families – as endorsed by dissidents like Guillermo Fariñas – is the right step to take now on behalf of the

values that U.S. foreign policy has always expressed toward Cuba. We urge your support for the *Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act*, H.R. 4645.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Jo Ann Emerson  
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress