

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, would like to express its support for H.R. 874 and S. 428, the "Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act," introduced by Reps. Delahunt and Flake and Sens. Dorgan and Enzi. The Chamber supports efforts to broaden economic engagement with the island in the belief that additional commercial and people-to-people contacts would promote a transition to democracy and full civil liberties.

Allowing Americans to act as ambassadors of freedom and democracy is an important first step in reforming U.S. policy toward Cuba. The last 50 years of U.S. policy toward Cuba have proven that unilateral sanctions do not work. Rather than encouraging Cuba to democratize, the embargo made a martyr out of a tyrant and actually helped prop up the Communist regime.

Unilateral sanctions also isolate the United States from its allies who choose not to join the U.S. in imposing sanctions, denying U.S. companies access to markets and bolstering third-country competitors. For American businesses, the U.S. International Trade Commission estimated in 2001 that the Cuba embargo costs American exporters up to \$1.2 billion annually in lost sales. Moreover, the embargo does not just hurt American businesses, but also workers and farmers who would benefit from trading with Cuba.

Because of the need to reform U.S. policy toward Cuba, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce urges Congress to pass H.R. 874 and S. 428 swiftly as an important first step toward a policy more likely to bring change to Cuba and commercial benefits to the United States.

Sincerely



R. Bruce Josten