

FREEDOM TO TRAVEL TO CUBA ACT FACT SHEET

Legislation has been introduced in the U.S. Congress -- the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act (H.R. 874 and S. 428) -- to end the current ban on travel by Americans to Cuba. While President Obama was able to use his executive authority to lift all limitations on travel by Cuban-Americans to the island, only Congress has the power to lift the travel ban for all Americans.

- **Opening Cuba to travel for all Americans is in the foreign policy interests of the United States.**

As twelve retired senior U.S. military officers recently advised President Obama, “By sending our best ambassadors – the American people – to engage their Cuban neighbors, we have a much better chance of influencing the future course of Cuban affairs” and promoting a more just and plural society than we do by continuing the current ineffective policy of isolation.

- **Opening Cuba to travel for all Americans would advance the interests of the Cuban people.**

In a statement released in support of travel for all Americans, Cuban dissidents Miriam Leiva (an independent journalist) and Oscar Espinosa Chepe, a released prisoner of conscience, said “We fully support lifting all travel restrictions on Americans to travel to Cuba. It would contribute to better knowing and understanding the realities in our countries. “

Recognizing the benefits of unrestricted contact, organizations including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches of Christ, Freedom House and Human Rights Watch, have endorsed the Freedom to Travel Act.

- **Opening Cuba to travel for all Americans would boost revenues and jobs for the travel sector.**

U.S. economic output would increase by between \$1.18 billion and \$1.61 billion a year and create 16,888 to 23,020 new jobs if current restrictions on travel to Cuba were lifted, according to an independent study conducted in 2002 by the Brattle Group, a respected economic forecasting firm.

- **Industry supports passage of the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act**

The National Tour Association, the U.S. Tour Operators Association, the American Society of Travel Agents, The Interactive Travel Services Association [whose members include Orbitz, CheapTickets, Expedia, Gailileo, and Priceline.com], and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce all support lifting the travel ban.