

HM 745

2015

1 House Memorial

2 A memorial to the President of the United States,
3 urging the President to limit engagement in diplomatic
4 relations with the Cuban government to measures
5 specifically designed to strengthen civil society in
6 Cuba, opposing the opening of a Cuban consulate or
7 other diplomatic office of the Cuban government in
8 Miami-Dade County, and requesting the President to
9 coordinate with state and local governments in
10 negotiating any repatriation or migration agreements.

11
12 WHEREAS, the interests of Floridians deserve the utmost
13 consideration by the United States Government as it restores
14 diplomatic relations with Cuba, an action announced by the
15 President of the United States on December 17, 2014, and

16 WHEREAS, restoring diplomatic relations with Cuba will
17 impact the people of this state in significant ways, and

18 WHEREAS, the freedom of the Cuban people to choose their
19 own future is foremost among the interests of the people of
20 Florida, home to more than 1.2 million Cuban Americans
21 intimately familiar with the inhumanity of the Castro regime and
22 the unnecessary misery endured by a people who, for more than 55
23 years, have suffered under a totalitarian communist dictatorship
24 responsible for an extensive and well-documented litany of human
25 rights abuses and for ruinous economic policies, and

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26 WHEREAS, a democratic Cuba would better serve the security,
27 economic activity, and cultural life of Florida and, for this
28 reason, the freedom of the Cuban people to choose their own
29 future is also in the interest of the people of Florida, and

30 WHEREAS, trade and tourism alone will not lead to democracy
31 in Cuba, and, accordingly, if the restoration of diplomatic
32 relations is to be something other than an economic and
33 political "life raft" for the Castro regime, every aspect of the
34 United States Government's engagement with Cuba must be
35 specifically designed to strengthen the ability of individuals,
36 businesses, investors, religious congregations, political
37 parties and organizations, artists, journalists, minority
38 groups, and other actors in the private sector to operate
39 independently of the state, to enjoy basic democratic freedoms
40 and human rights, and to advocate for their own interests, and

41 WHEREAS, change in United States Government policy toward
42 the Cuba government must not, without evidence, be necessarily
43 equated with progress and, as negotiations begin, immediate
44 progress is not yet apparent, and

45 WHEREAS, although the announcement of December 17, 2014, to
46 restore full diplomatic relations with Cuba resulted in the
47 release of United States contractor Alan Gross after 5 years of
48 detention, it also resulted in the United States releasing three
49 Cuban spies fairly tried, convicted, and sentenced for their
50 crimes, including the murder of four humanitarian workers,
51 without informing the families of these victims, and

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52 WHEREAS, although the Cuba government, in connection with
53 the December 17, 2014, announcement, released 53 Cuban citizens
54 wrongfully held as political prisoners, many others remain
55 unjustly imprisoned and, with the Cuban laws and practices that
56 led to their detention firmly in place, many of those released
57 remain subject to further detention or imprisonment for peaceful
58 political activity, made clear by the re-arrest of Ronaldo Reyes
59 Rabanal, Luis Enrique Labrador, and Marcelino Abreu Bonora
60 within one month of the President's announcement and the
61 detention of Cuban performance artist Tania Bruguera less than
62 two weeks after the normalization of diplomatic relations was
63 announced, and

64 WHEREAS, although increased trade and remittances from
65 Americans to their relatives in Cuba may alleviate economic
66 hardships suffered by Cubans, these measures may also serve to
67 support a ruinous Cuban economic system and provide financial
68 support to the Cuban regime at the expense of the Cuban
69 diaspora, and

70 WHEREAS, the presence of a Cuban diplomatic office in
71 Miami-Dade County will come at the expense of taxpayers and
72 residents due to increased costs of law enforcement, public
73 safety, traffic control, and other local resources required to
74 maintain the security, tranquility, quality of life, and the
75 flow of commerce in the face of the protests, disturbances, and
76 general unrest that the Cuban government would willingly provoke

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77 with the presence of such a diplomatic office in Miami-Dade
 78 County, and

79 WHEREAS, in negotiating repatriation and migration
 80 agreements, the United States Government must consider the
 81 disruptive impact on individuals, families, and communities, as
 82 well as on state and local resources, posed by the thousands of
 83 Floridians potentially subject to deportation, who acquired such
 84 status under a wide variety of circumstances, to a totalitarian
 85 state with a well-documented history of human rights abuses, and

86 WHEREAS, any such repatriation and migration agreements
 87 must be developed in consultation with state and local
 88 governments, and

89 WHEREAS, such repatriation and migration agreements must
 90 address the return to the United States of fugitives currently
 91 living in Cuba, and

92 WHEREAS, in negotiating repatriation and migration
 93 agreements, the United States Government must also review and
 94 revise policies that were intended to help Cubans resettle in
 95 the United States and freely and safely travel between the two
 96 countries but that have also been exploited by criminal
 97 enterprises involved in the drug trade and fraudulent schemes at
 98 the expense of Floridians, NOW, THEREFORE,

99
 100 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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102 (1) That the President of the United States is
103 respectfully urged to limit engagement in diplomatic relations
104 with the Cuban government to measures specifically designed to
105 strengthen civil society in Cuba.

106 (2) That the opening in Miami-Dade County of a Cuban
107 consulate or any other diplomatic office of the Cuban government
108 is respectfully opposed.

109 (3) That the President of the United States is
110 respectfully requested to coordinate with state and local
111 governments in negotiating any repatriation or migration
112 agreements, to minimize hardships on families and communities
113 and in taking action to disrupt criminal pipelines enabled by
114 the current United States policy regarding Cuba.

115 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
116 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the
117 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
118 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of
119 the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.