

Resolution on Cuba

The following resolution on Cuba has been approved by the membership. As requested, it will be mailed to President Barack Obama and all members of the United States House of Representatives and the Senate.

The Latin American Studies Association, which represents over 5,500 professors, researchers and graduate students who are concerned about Latin America, has consistently opposed the United States embargo against Cuba and favored the establishment of diplomatic relations. Following is an updated version of our resolution that was passed in 1994:

Whereas the United States has built a wall between two nations by banning travel and restricting cultural exchanges with Cuba, preventing the free flow of people and ideas between two countries in contradiction with the principles of freedom of thought and civil liberties for all peoples, and reducing the potential for dialogue;

Whereas the U. S. State Department's denial of visas for Cuban scholars to participate in the 2003, 2004 and 2006 congresses of the Latin American Studies Association damaged the intellectual and academic exchange essential to the organization, and led to the relocation of the 2007 congress from Boston to Montreal;

Whereas the U. S. embargo against Cuba causes human suffering, raises the cost of needed food and medicines and has an especially deleterious impact on the lives of children, the elderly and the sick;

Whereas current rules forbid purchase of Cuban exports, so ships carrying food to Cuba must depart empty and thus charge higher rates;

Whereas even the most recent report of the U.S. National Intelligence Council recognizes that Cuba is not a threat to U.S. national security;

Whereas the international community has condemned the unilateral U.S. embargo, by voting with overwhelming majorities in the U.N. General Assembly and by trading with Cuba;

Whereas the opposition to U.S. policy is widespread within U.S. civil society, including calls for an end to the embargo from the Cuban-American community, business executives, leading newspapers such as *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*;

Whereas many U.S. citizens, some in defiance of U.S. law, are traveling to Cuba and delivering needed medicines and supplies;

Whereas more than 900 artists, arts educators and presenters signed a letter directed to President Barack Obama in March 2009 asking for the elimination of barriers to cultural and educational exchanges between Cuba and the United States;

Whereas every country in the Western Hemisphere other than the United States now has normal diplomatic and trading relations with Cuba;

Whereas changes were authorized in section 621 of the Omnibus Appropriation Act, 2009 and the general license authorizing family travel to Cuba has been reinstated (sections 515.560 and 515.561 of 31 CFR Chapter V);

Therefore be it resolved that:

1) The Latin American Studies Association strongly supports the elimination of unilateral U.S. sanctions against Cuba and the establishment of normal diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States.

2) The Latin American Studies Association urges the United States (a) to take immediate steps to allow unrestricted travel to Cuba from the United States, and (b) to facilitate the travel of Cuban students to study in the United States at all levels.

3) The Latin American Studies Association further urges both the United States and Cuba to eliminate or minimize barriers to scholarly communication by permitting: (a) access to research materials in each country, including library databases; b) people-to-people exchanges by educational organizations; and (c) travel by Cuban scholars to attend professional meetings and to lecture and teach in the United States.

4) This resolution will be mailed to President Barack Obama and all members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. ■