

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 26, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to express our concern that the omission of the governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela at the ninth Summit of the Americas to be held next month in Los Angeles could undermine the U.S.'s standing in the region. This year's Summit – hosted by the United States for the first time since the inaugural Summit in 1994 – comes at a critical time for Latin America and the Caribbean as the region grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the ongoing impacts of climate change.

As staunch believers in the important diplomatic role that multilateral summits can play in addressing these common crises, we feel strongly that excluding countries could jeopardize future relations throughout the region and put some of the ambitious policy proposals your administration launched under Build Back Better World at risk. The leaders of Mexico, Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras and others have threatened not to attend the Summit unless all countries are invited. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) have both called on the U.S. government not to exclude any country at next month's Summit.

If we are truly committed to addressing the complex regional challenges we face together as a hemisphere, the Summit must be inclusive in many ways, including we engage as good-faith negotiators with countries who do not share our views. A fractured Summit will

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therefore negatively impact our bilateral relationships with allies in the region who have maintained good relationships with both the United States and the uninvited countries.

While we may not support many of the actions taken by the governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, we believe that a policy of engagement will yield more fruitful results than a continued policy of isolation. We were happy to see your Administration take this same stance earlier this year when you held high-level migration dialogues with the Cuban government as well as when you sent a high-ranking delegation to Venezuela to meet with Nicolas Maduro and successfully secure the release of two imprisoned Americans.

The Summit of the Americas is a special opportunity to gather as a region and provide a platform for open discussion. An invitation for Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to participate in this year's Summit is not an endorsement of those countries' visions or ideologies. It is an invitation for engagement at a regional level that should be extended to every country in the Americas.

We are hopeful that you will reconsider the omission of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to this year's Summit of the Americas. We look forward to working with your Administration to develop strategies for meaningful engagement with these countries at both the multilateral and bilateral level.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



GREGORY W. MEEKS
Chair



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress



BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

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ADRIANO ESPAILLAT
Member of Congress



BOBBY L. RUSH
Member of Congress



RAUL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress



ANDY LEVIN
Member of Congress



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SARA JACOBS
Member of Congress



JUAN VARGAS
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JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCIA
Member of Congress

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MARK POCAN
Member of Congress



BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress



PETER A. DEFAZIO
Member of Congress



GRACE MENG
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
Department of State