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One Hundred Nineteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

November 18, 2026

The Honorable Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez
President of the Republic of Cuba
Embassy of Cuba
2630 16th St NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear President Díaz-Canel,

We write to urge your government to release the more than 200 political prisoners whose cases have been discussed in recent exchanges between Cuba and the United States. At a moment of profound hardship for the Cuban people and an impasse in bilateral diplomacy, their release would reflect a significant humanitarian act and an important step toward a more constructive dialogue and relationship between our countries.

We have long believed human rights is central to our policy towards Cuba. Our support for engagement has always been based on the premise that the United States can better advance its serious concerns regarding arbitrary detention, restrictions on peaceful expression and assembly, and the absence of adequate protections for due process through diplomacy. We believe that the decades of sanctions have failed to advance these goals and that only diplomacy can help address these concerns while advancing the interests and well-being of both our peoples.

We recognize the significant economic reforms your government has announced in recent months, which come amid severe external pressure. Expanding opportunities for private enterprise, allowing more direct participation in international commerce, and creating greater room for investment represent meaningful steps toward transforming Cuba's economy. Fully implemented, these measures could expand opportunity for Cubans and strengthen national sovereignty through greater prosperity, productive capacity, and integration into international markets.

These changes are taking place under considerable external pressure that we have opposed in the United States Congress, including the tightening of sanctions that have made life more difficult for the Cuban people. The Trump Administration has argued that its pressure campaign was an important factor behind the recent opening, even as your government describes the reforms as internal decisions responding to Cuba's own needs. Our governments need not agree on what prompted these measures to recognize their potential value or pursue further progress. The task now must be to build on this opening with lasting steps that improve the lives of the Cuban people, ease the humanitarian crisis, and open a path toward opportunity and prosperity for all.

Despite these developments, bilateral discussions between the United States and Cuba appear to have stalled. Releasing the more than 200 political prisoners discussed in those exchanges could help break the impasse. Above all, it would reunite families and end the suffering of individuals imprisoned for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights. It would also address a central concern shared across the U.S. political spectrum.

We urge you to authorize their prompt release on terms that allow them to reunite with their families and rebuild their lives freely in Cuba. This would be an important step toward resolving the cases of all those detained for exercising their fundamental freedoms.

Such a decision would be a sovereign act within your government's authority, consistent with international law and the dignity and aspirations of the Cuban people. It would demonstrate confidence in Cuba's future and strengthen the case made by those of us in Congress who believe that engagement and expanded economic opportunity offer a better path forward for both the Cuban and American people. Although no single measure can resolve the longstanding differences between our countries, this one could go a long way toward building trust and creating political space for meaningful progress that can ease the humanitarian crisis 9 million Cubans endure on a daily basis.

I hope you will seize this opportunity, and I look forward to working to move the U.S.-Cuba relationship in a more constructive direction.

Sincerely,





GREGORY W. MEEKS
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee

JOAQUIN CASTRO
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere