



TAKE ACTION!!

Urge your Representative to Co-Sponsor *H.R. 874, The Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act.*

February 9, 2009

ACT NOW

Please call your member of the House of Representatives and ask him or her to co-sponsor (sign on) to *H.R. 874, The Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act*. This bill – introduced by Rep. Delahunt (D-MA) and Rep. Flake (R-AZ) last week - would allow travel between the United States and Cuba without existing restrictions.

H.R. 874 calls for lifting travel restrictions to Cuba for all Americans, restoring our right as citizens of the United States to travel freely and takes a giant step in fostering engagement over isolation with all countries in the hemisphere.

A companion bill is expected to be introduced into the Senate soon. We will inform you when this happens and ask you to contact your two Senators at that time.

USCCB POSITION

USCCB is well aware of the many limitations on the freedom of the Church and other parts of civil society in Cuba, of the routine violations of human rights, and limitations on freedom of speech and assembly. However, many decades of U.S. imposed isolation have not had any discernible impact on the current regime. As was the case before the fall of the Berlin Wall, engagement and cultural exchange can be agents of change, not isolation.

Along with the Cuba bishops, USCCB believes engagement with Cuba will do more than the current policy to promote respect for human rights. As Bishop Howard J. Hubbard recently wrote in a letter to Reps. Delahunt and Flake (copy attached):

The USCCB has for many years consistently called for relaxing the sanctions against Cuba. These policies have largely failed to promote greater freedom, democracy and respect for human rights in Cuba...Improving the lives of the Cuban people and encouraging democracy and human rights in Cuba will best be advanced through more, rather than less, contact between the Cuban and American people.

ACTION REQUESTED

Call the Capitol Switchboard number: (202) 224-3121. Ask for your Representative and urge him or her to co-sponsor H.R. 874. You will most likely speak to the Representative's staff person. If so, urge them to please contact either Cliff Stammerman in Rep. Delahunt's (D) office or Chandler Morse in Rep. Flake's (R) office to co-sponsor H.R. 874.

Please Give Us Your Feedback: Send USCCB a message at asmall@usccb.org or give us a call at (202) 541 3153 if you have an questions or to tell us about your contact with your congressional office. For more background on Cuba, see

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/cuba.shtml>