

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP

August 10, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Kerry,

When you visit Cuba this week, the Obama Administration will be sending its most chilling signal yet; that it views diplomatic relations with the Castro regime to be more important than the interests of the American people, or the basic human rights of the Cuban people. As I have said before, I will make sure that the embassy you are opening in Havana will not have a U.S. ambassador unless, at the very least, we see real political reforms and progress on human rights, the return to the U.S. of harbored terrorists and fugitives to face justice, and the resolution of outstanding American property claims and judgments against the Cuban government.

It is a diplomatic and moral failure on this Administration's part to have moved forward with opening an embassy in Havana and providing the regime with a windfall of U.S. dollars without achieving any of our national interests in return. Rather than negotiate with Cuba from a position of strength, the Obama Administration chose to give away too much up front in exchange for the regime's empty promises of future discussions.

Throughout the Obama Administration's negotiations with Cuba, a demoralizing message was also sent to Cuba's valiant pro-democracy movement, which had neither a voice nor a presence in these talks. Over the past eight months since President Obama announced his new Cuba policy, a steady stream of administration officials and members of Congress visited Cuba with few of them bothering to meet with Cuban democracy and human rights leaders and none demanding to meet with political prisoners. Not surprisingly, the regime has responded with an unprecedented wave of repression and political arrests.

Despite all the setbacks President Obama's policy have inflicted on the cause of a free and democratic Cuba, I urge you to at least use the opportunity of your upcoming August 14th trip to Havana to demand the freedom and rights of the Cuban people. During your meetings with Cuban officials, you should demand that all political prisoners are released. During your visit, you should meet with the courageous leaders who are fighting to bring freedom to Cuba and invite them to the ceremony you will be presiding over at the new American embassy. This should include leaders such as Antonio Rodiles, head of Estado de SANTS; Berta Soler, head of

the Ladies in White; Jorge Garcia Perez Antunez, former Amnesty International prisoner of conscience and human rights activist; Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, a U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient; Ivan Hernandez Carrillo, former Amnesty International prisoner of conscience and labor leader; and Guillermo Farinas, recipient of the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

They, among many others, and not the Castro family, are the legitimate representatives of the Cuban people. For the Obama Administration to shun these courageous Cubans after years of enduring imprisonment, physical abuses, assassinations and threats would be another unforgivable betrayal of America's moral leadership in the world. The Obama Administration has already given the Castro regime enough, and it stands to give away even more as it loosens business and travel regulations. At the very least, don't send another message that, under this president, America cares more about endearing itself to the oppressors instead of standing up for the oppressed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MR', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marco Rubio  
United States Senator