

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND  
TRANSPORTATION  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

October 12, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the direction of the U.S.-Cuba relationship more than 18 months after you announced the changes in December 2014. It is disappointing that you have not placed a higher priority on preventing the trafficking of property and obtaining compensation for the property stolen from Americans.

It is unfortunate that your Administration waited 12 months before beginning discussions with the Cuban government on its illegal confiscation of property stolen from Americans. In that time and the 57 years before then, the Cuban government and government-controlled companies have continued to profit and benefit from property that rightfully belongs to Americans.

It is disappointing that you have decided to provide Cuba benefits during the thawing in the relationship while not placing a priority on this issue. You should be pressing the Castro regime to tackle important issues such as Cuba's terrible human right actions, continued assault on freedom of expression, and a quick resolution of compensation for the trafficking of property stolen from Americans.

I understand there are more than 5,900 certified claims valued at more than \$8 billion owed to Americans who had property confiscated by the Castro regime. It is important to focus on the entirety of the Cuban government's massive confiscation and ridiculous efforts by the Castro regime to manufacture counter claims against the U.S. government to avoid making Americans whole again.

I am concerned that your efforts to loosen the restrictions on travel to Cuba results in the trafficking—by Americans—of stolen property taken from other Americans, including hotels, cruise terminals, and even the art in Havana's major museums. It also includes stolen trademarks, such as rum and cigar brands, that American travelers may be purchasing in violation of the express prohibition in U.S. law against transactions involving confiscated property. It is unclear how allowing the production of movies and television shows and the playing of a Major League Baseball exhibition game in Cuba will not increase the number of Americans trafficking in property stolen from Americans.

I respectfully request an updated briefing on the current discussions on compensation for the trafficking of property stolen from Americans, timeline for resolution of the issue, and concrete efforts to prevent Americans that travel to Cuba from trafficking in stolen property taken from other Americans.

I urge you to place a higher priority on preventing the trafficking of property and obtaining compensation for the property stolen from Americans.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

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

Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator