

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 14, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

As members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation, we write with a deep sense of urgency and respectfully ask that you act as quickly as possible to remove Cuba from the State Sponsor of Terrorism (SSOT) list. As you well know, Cuba was removed from the list in 2015 by President Obama and yourself after thorough review on the basis that the designation is without merit. Given the information and evidence we have reviewed, Cuba should never have been placed again on the SSOT list. It was a vindictive action taken by the Trump Administration in January 2021 as it departed office, and the policy is well overdue for change. In fact, Cuba and the United States have a functioning bilateral cooperation agreement on counterterrorism.

We believe the time to act and remove Cuba from the SSOT list is now – not months from now. There is no political or other policy argument that can justify the U.S. continuing to knowingly add to the suffering of the Cuban people. The unabated hardships facing all sectors of Cuban society are the driving force for tens of thousands abandoning their homes and migrating to the United States. It therefore runs counter to U.S. direct interests to continue the collective economic restrictions that result from Cuba remaining on the SSOT list.

As for the Trump Administration's specious reason for returning Cuba to the SSOT list, during his most recent visit to the United States, Colombian President Gustavo Petro appealed personally to you for Cuba to be removed from the list to facilitate peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas. The importance of these negotiations merits a timely and affirmative response. For similar reasons, the President of Mexico has also requested that the designation against Cuba be rescinded.

As a candidate for President, you promised to address re-engagement with Cuba and return to the policy begun during the Obama-Biden administration, and we supported you on this commitment. We recognize that much has changed in Cuba and in the United States since 2018, but two and a half years into your Presidency, the overwhelming number of sanctions put in place by your predecessor, including placing Cuba back on the SSOT list, remain in effect. Even modest reforms to support the Cuban private sector reported last month by the media (but not yet announced officially) will not bring relief to the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people.

From the poorest and most vulnerable to the struggling private sector to religious, humanitarian and cultural actors, the Cuban people are enduring the most dire deprivations in recent memory – everyone is suffering. While there are multiple reasons for the economic crisis in Cuba, without a doubt a significant contributing factor is the restrictions and penalties facing international financial institutions and other entities because Cuba is on the SSOT list. Removing Cuba from this list is one thing that the U.S. can do immediately to ease the daily hardships facing so many Cuban families, including its struggling private sector.

We call on you now, Mr. President, to help ordinary Cubans at this critical time by acting swiftly to remove Cuba from the State Sponsor of Terrorism list. It is the only option worthy of the United States and we stand ready to support you in this decision.

Sincerely,



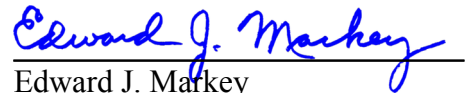
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
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