

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 21, 2021

Dear Leaders of Democratic States:

In the streets of Cuba, the people are bravely marching for a new day of freedom and demanding an end to the illegitimate, brutal Cuban dictatorship. After more than six decades of brutally oppressive rule, the Cuban people are risking their lives to loudly denounce the disastrous communist regime that has time and time again failed to promote and protect the general welfare of its citizens. The people are shouting "libertad," and demanding freedom, democracy and human rights. As the Cuban people risk their lives for freedom, the world must stand with them in this critically important moment. As the democratically-elected leaders of the world's free countries, we write to you today to fervently implore you to take action in support of the Cuban people and their democratic aspirations. It is time to finally end the evil and murderous reign of the communist, illegitimate Cuban regime that has murdered, tortured and oppressed for far too long.

In concerted solidarity with the Cuban people, we believe there are four essential actions that we all must take immediately to promote freedom for the Cuban people and place further pressure on the corrupt and murderous Cuban regime to end its reign of terror.

First, we urge you to emphatically denounce the illegitimate Cuban regime, hold it accountable for its human rights abuses and immediately end diplomatic relations. Freedom-loving nations must make clear our full and unwavering support for Cuba's pro-democracy movement, and for free and fair elections, with international supervision. Additionally, all political prisoners must be released unconditionally, independent media uncensored and political parties legalized. In Cuba, the basic civil and human rights of the people have been systematically stripped away by the communist regime. Just last week, as peaceful protests continued across the island, the regime sought to silence powerful voices speaking out for freedom. They targeted and captured Berta Soler, an Afro-Cuban activist and the leader of the renowned human rights group, "The Ladies in White." The regime has also kidnapped Cuban opposition leader José Daniel Ferrer and his 18-year-old son. Thankfully, José's son and Berta have been released, but Mr. Ferrer remains jailed and Berta is trapped in her home which is surrounded by the regime's security forces. These are just two examples of the atrocious actions this brutal dictatorship has taken in recent days.

Over the last week, Cuban activists have been regularly kidnapped, unjustly jailed, physically mutilated and murdered. A priest was left bruised and bloodied after he was beaten with a baseball bat, children have been ripped from their homes and forced to assist the regime's thugs in oppressing protesters and images of bloodied, unarmed protesters have flooded social media. Some protesters have been killed. The international community must come together with one voice to condemn these criminal abuses and demand freedom for the people. Furthermore, we encourage you to work with us in forming an International Criminal Tribunal for Cuba for crimes against humanity and work to hold the communist regime accountable. Organizations such as JusticeCuba, Cuba Archives and the Cuban American Bar Association have already been compiling the names and crimes of those who have committed human rights abuses.

Second, we believe it is critical that the freedom-loving nations of the world immediately end all financial support to the regime. A full withdrawal of financial support by the international community will end a critical lifeline that allows the Cuban regime to maintain its tight grip on power. Any nation that stands for freedom, democracy and human rights cannot also continue to support the communist Cuban regime's brutal oppression with appeasement policies in the form of increased trade, tourism, extensions of credit or investments in joint ventures with the regime. Cuba's tourism is largely run by the Cuban military, and stays in Cuban hotels, use of foreign currency exchanges and even purchases in regime-controlled stores directly benefit the Cuban people's oppressors. The failed appeasement policies of the Obama-Biden administration did nothing to promote freedom for the Cuban people or end the oppression forced on them by Cuba's malevolent dictatorship - it only emboldened the regime and funded its campaign of oppression. All money that goes into Cuba through any trade, tourism or commercial relationship directly enriches the regime.

Third, we believe the world's democracies must work collaboratively to coordinate democratic assistance for the brave Cuban freedom advocates. We must rally worldwide support for democracy assistance for former political prisoners and their families, civil society leaders, pro-democracy movements and other democracy-building assistance directly to the Cuban people. Former communist countries who have transitioned to democracy, such as Poland and the Czech Republic, are particularly adept at this type of assistance and have experience on the island. This outreach must be expanded, and the international community must stand together to do even more to support those fighting for democracy on the island.

Finally, it is of utmost importance that we do everything in our power to make sure the people of Cuba can communicate with each other and the outside world through unfettered internet access, cellular service, cellular and satellite phones, and other technology that may assist the democratic opposition. A primary weapon of

dictatorships like the Cuban regime is silencing their opposition: they stop them from talking to each other, from receiving information from those around the world who want to help them, and from getting the images of the regime's oppression to the outside world. It is no surprise that one of the regime's first acts at the beginning of these historic protests was to cut off the people's internet and cellular service. It is also no surprise that the Chinese Communist regime aids in suppression of the operation of its communications network. We must help the Cuban people overcome the telecommunications and cellular services blockade so that they may receive outside information from a variety of sources, and maintain connections with each other.

Today, after decades of tyranny, oppression and economic devastation because of communist rule, the Cuban people are rising up for freedom. They are rising up for opportunity. They are rising up for democracy. It's time to end this terrible plague of communism on the Cuban people. It's time for freedom and democracy to prevail. We urge you to stand up for a free Cuba and show your commitment to freedom with immediate action to support their cause. The time for democracy in Cuba is now.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



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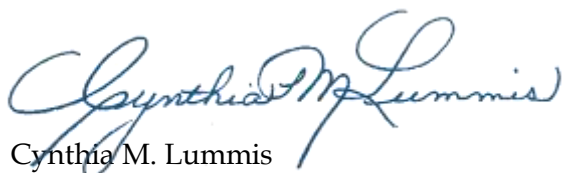
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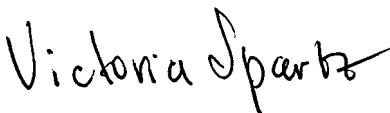
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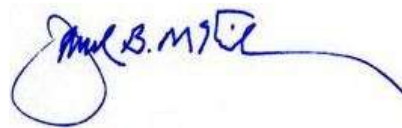
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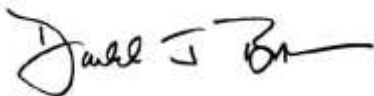
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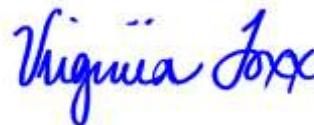
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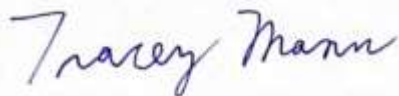
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