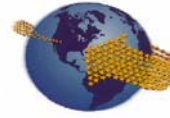




USA★ENGAGE



American Farm Bureau Federation*



Emergency Committee for American Trade

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Business Groups Issue Strong Endorsement of Cuba Sanctions Reform Bills

Washington, DC – The **ATRIP-USA*Engage Alliance** and the **National Foreign Trade Council** today, on behalf of its business, agriculture and travel members, along with the **American Farm Bureau Federation**, the **United States Council for International Business** and the **Emergency Committee for American Trade** endorsed **The Cuban Sanctions Reform Act of 2004**, which requires annual Congressional renewal of existing travel and trade sanctions on Cuba. The bill—introduced in the Senate by Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) and in the House by Reps. Butch Otter (R-ID), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), William Delahunt (D-MA), George Nethercutt (R-WA) and Sam Farr (D-CA) — does not end the restrictions on travel and trade with Cuba, nor does it limit the President’s authority to impose new sanctions. Under the Cuba Sanctions Reform Act, sanctions would expire one year after the bill’s enactment, unless Congress approves, and the President signs, a joint resolution to continue them.

The business and agricultural groups—accounting for millions of jobs across America and representing billions of dollars in economic earnings, tax revenue, and employee wages/salaries—have long advocated the position that restricting travel to and economic activity in Cuba by U.S. citizens and companies prevents the open exchange of American values and ideals, restricts the freedom of American citizens, hurts families on both sides of the Florida Straits, and impedes the prospects for better U.S.-Cuban relations in years to come.

“The bi-partisan, bi-cameral legislation introduced today establishes the tools required by Congress for a common-sense approach to sanctions policy and future U.S.-Cuba relations,” said Bill Reinsch, President of the National Foreign Trade Council and co-chairman of USA*Engage, “and builds on years of Congressional momentum supporting a more sensible and effective policy toward Cuba. We commend the co-sponsors of this legislation for their vision and leadership.”

“Our current policy toward Cuba has produced little or no positive change in more than 40 years,” added Jody Frisch, Executive Director of ATRIP and the Alliance. “The travel ban and economic sanctions have only served to increase the isolation and poverty of the Cuban people, which in turn has helped the Castro regime maintain its 45-year grip on power. Providing Congress with a

mechanism for a measured response to each provision of the Cuba embargo is vital to ensuring the effectiveness of U.S. policy toward Cuba now and in future.”

"Unilateral economic sanctions as a general rule are bad policy," said Thomas Niles, president of the United States Council for International Business. "In the case of Cuba, they have turned a problem between the free world and Fidel Castro into a sore point between the U.S. and our allies. It's time to deal squarely with this matter, and this legislation is one valuable way to do so."

"This legislation represents a positive step forward in developing a constructive U.S. policy towards Cuba that involves both the Administration and Congress and, through the yearly process envisioned by this legislation, will help assure that U.S. policy is based on the current circumstances and affirmative policy choices," said Calman Cohen, President of the Emergency Committee for American Trade.

Chris Garza of the American Farm Bureau Federation added, "Since the adoption of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (TSRA) of 2000, U.S. agriculture has seen steady increases of food sales to Cuba that we believe would be significantly increased if restrictions on Cuba would be removed. Our sales this year, \$116 million, have surpassed last year's sales during the same period, \$43 million. Removing current restrictions on Cuba would have the potential of advancing U.S. goals of change in Cuba as well as providing the United States with economic benefits."

The National Foreign Trade Council (www.nftc.org) is a leading business organization advocating an open, rules-based global trading system. Founded in 1914 by a broad-based group of American companies, the NFTC now serves 300 member companies through its offices in Washington and New York.

*USA*ENGAGE is a coalition of more than 670 small and large businesses, agriculture groups and trade associations working to seek alternatives to the proliferation of unilateral U.S. foreign policy sanctions and to promote the benefits of U.S. engagement abroad. For more information on USA*ENGAGE and the harmful effects of unilateral trade sanctions, visit the USA*ENGAGE web site at www.usaengage.org.*

The Association of Travel-Related Industry Professionals (ATRIP) is the nation's leading voice representing the interests of the travel industry and traveling public on issues related to open travel. ATRIP, comprising a broad spectrum of travel industry professionals—from travel agents to charter companies, airlines to tour operators—advocates for beneficial economic policies for the travel and tourism industry and the elimination of unnecessary or unduly burdensome restrictions on travel. www.atripusa.org.

The United States Council for International Business is a business advocacy and policy development group representing 300 global companies, accounting firms, law firms, and business associations. It is the American affiliate of the International Chamber of Commerce and the International Organization of Employers.

The Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT) is an organization of the heads of leading U.S. international business enterprises representing all major sectors of the American economy, with annual worldwide sales over \$2 trillion and approximately 5 million employees. ECAT's purpose is to promote economic growth through the expansion of international trade and investment. www.ecattrade.com

The American Farm Bureau Federation is the nation's largest general farm organization with affiliates in the 50 states and Puerto Rico. www.fb.org

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