

**Americas Society/Council of the Americas
Center for Democracy in the Americas
Emergency Committee for American Trade
National Foreign Trade Council
U.S. Agricultural Coalition for Cuba**

September 13, 2016

The Honorable K. Michael Conaway
U.S. House of Representatives
2430 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4311

Dear Congressman Conaway,

We fully support the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba. The resumption of full diplomatic relations with the island nation has notably improved U.S. relations throughout the hemisphere. While some regulatory changes have been made to permit some commerce between the U.S. and Cuba, only Congress can address the statutes that mandate the bulk of the embargo still frozen in place.

We applaud the House Agriculture Committee decision to hold a hearing on Wednesday, September 14, on U.S. agricultural trade with Cuba. Ironically, while regulatory changes now permit credit for some goods sales to Cubans, existing statutory language bars private credit financing of otherwise allowable agricultural sales by U.S. producers. This simply makes no sense.

We urge the Committee to endorse HR 3687 sponsored by Rep. Rick Crawford, the Cuba Agricultural Export Act, that would permit a person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to provide payment or financing terms for sales of agricultural commodities to Cuba or an individual or entity in Cuba.

Enactment of HR 3687 will put our farmers on a level playing field with foreign competitors who sell into the Cuban market with credit financing; enable the Cuban people to have access to affordable and high-quality U.S. agricultural goods on normal trading terms, and end the practice of using food as a foreign policy weapon.

Sincerely,

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