

# *Open Letter to Barack Obama Urging Normalization of Relations with Cuba*

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Washington, January 20 (RHC-EFE) -- A total of 78 former politicians, businessmen and members of the Cuban-American community on Monday sent an open letter to U.S. President Barack Obama, asking him to work with Congress to move forward on normalizing relations with Cuba.

The letter, signed by three former assistant secretaries of state for Western Hemisphere relations, former top officials from across the political spectrum and important Cuban-American businessmen, asks Obama to "work with Congress to update the legislative framework with regard to Cuba so that it... reflects 21st century realities."

The text hails the step taken by Obama on December 17th when he announced the pending normalization of diplomatic relations with Cuba after more than half a century of animosity, an agreement negotiated in secret with Havana over more than a year.

Signatories of the letter also highlighted the failure of the blockade policy implemented by Washington against Havana. The open letter, which was published on the eve of Obama's State of the Union address, also was supported by well-known businessmen, including the Fanjul brothers, who are Cuban-

Americans, and Venezuelan magnate Gustavo Cisneros, who was born in Cuba.

Many of the people who signed the letter had sent Obama an open letter last year, saying he had an opportunity to take executive action to change aspects of U.S.-Cuba policy. The signers also reminded Obama of the opportunity offered by the upcoming Summit of the Americas, which will be held in Panama in April and to which, for the first time, Cuba has been invited.

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