

# *Visiting U.S. Congressmen Advocate Consolidation of Advances in U.S.-Cuba Ties*

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Havana, February 23(RHC)-- A U.S. congressional delegation, visiting Cuba since Sunday, said that most members of the U.S. Congress advocate the consolidation of advances achieved so far in U.S.-Cuba ties.

The U.S. delegation is led by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) and Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi).

At a press conference at the U.S. embassy in Havana, Senator Leahy said: "It's inevitable that we work to improve bilateral ties, for the sake of the future generations. That's the wish of the business sector, the scientific community, farmers and other sectors of U.S. society.

The Democratic senator for Vermont added: "We must move forward. The Cuban government and people want this too, as we have confirmed in the meetings and contacts our delegation has had over the past days here in Havana."

Regarding the persistence of U.S. sanctions, Senator Leahy said that the embargo (blockade) and the Cuba travel ban will be lifted 'the sooner the better,' he said, but insisted that it will take time since there are still many obstacles in the way.

Senator Thomas Udall (D-New Mexico) pointed to what he called 'the efficient, professional work being carried out from the beginning by negotiating teams of both Cuba and the US.

Democratic congressman James McGovern said there is bipartisan support on Capitol Hill for consolidating ties with Cuba. He said though that the hardest part is the Republic leadership in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, as they refuse to debate any proposal toward improved ties with Cuba.

Cuban President Raúl Castro received the U.S. congressmen on Wednesday. Prior to that meeting, the U.S. visitors held talks with Cuban Ministers of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez; Foreign Trade and Investment, Rodrigo Malmierca, and Agriculture, Gustavo Rodríguez.

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