

U.S. House Democrats urge Biden to revert to Obama-era Cuba detente

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The building of United States Embassy in Havana.

Washington, March 4 (RHC)-- Eighty U.S. House of Representatives Democrats have urged President Joe Biden to repeal Donald Trump's "cruel" sanctions on Cuba and renew engagement.

In a letter to Biden seen by Reuters news agency, they urged the Democratic president to sign an executive order "without delay" to end restrictions on travel and remittances, noting that well over half of Cubans depend on the latter.

"With the stroke of a pen, you can assist struggling Cuban families and promote a more constructive approach," they said.

The letter was led by lawmakers Bobby Rush, Gwen Moore, Barbara Lee and Steve Cohen, long-time supporters of engagement with Cuba. Signers also included the leaders of the influential House of

Representatives Foreign Affairs, Financial Services and Appropriations committees.

“This letter, signed by a number of key powerbrokers in the House of Representatives, will help empower U.S. foreign policy officials in the Biden administration who seek to rebuild what Trump destroyed - a constructive, productive and civil approach toward Cuba and its people,” said Peter Kornbluh, a senior analyst at the National Security Archive.

The Trump administration took more than 200 initiatives to tighten the decades-old U.S. trade embargo on Cuba over four years, citing concerns about a lack of democracy and Havana’s support for Venezuela’s socialist government.

The letter also urged Biden to restart diplomatic engagement on areas of mutual interest like health and security and restaff the U.S. embassy, which was reduced to skeletal staffing under Trump over still unexplained health incidents among U.S. diplomats in Havana.

It should also “reverse the recent politicized decision by the departing Trump Administration to add Cuba back to the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism,” the letter states.

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