

# *U.S. Senator Says Blockade Against Cuba Contrary to U.S. Ideals*

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Havana, August 18 (RHC) -- Media outlets in the U.S. state of Vermont report recent statements by Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy who said that U.S. ideals must be promoted by lifting the travel ban and the blockade against Cuba.

Speaking to reporters on Monday and after having attended the flag-raising ceremony at the U.S. embassy in Havana, Senator Leahy defended the U.S. citizens' right to travel to the island. "We can go anywhere -- Iran, we can go to North Korea, assuming they'll let you in, but not Cuba," Leahy said. "We should have students going back and forth, businesses going back and forth."

The United States government allows exemptions to the travel ban for United States citizens conducting any of 12 activities that include journalism, religious promotion and education.

The VTDigger cites Leahy as saying that further progress toward normalization of Cuban relations with the United States may offer opportunities for Vermont's farmers, and potentially its dairy farmers in particular. These effects are likely to be slight, however, owing to the island country's small economy, Leahy said.

Leahy has been active in leading efforts in Congress to normalize relations with Cuba.

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