

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 1, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary of Transportation
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Chao:

We write to express our strong opposition to the Administration's decision to prohibit U.S. commercial flights from the United States to Cuban cities other than Havana.ⁱ

This decision – which will result in the suspension of commercial air travel to nine Cuban cities – is yet another step backwards for the people of Cuba and the United States. This Administration's approach to Cuba has severely disadvantaged American and Cuban businesses, farmers, and citizens while failing to achieve any U.S. foreign policy or national security objectives.

Many travelers, some of whom are Cuban-Americans visiting relatives in areas far from Havana, will now have to pay significantly more for charter flights, which are exempted from the new restrictions. Additionally, eliminating flights to nine destinations including Santiago and Santa Clara will negatively impact U.S. carriers, which are being forced to end service to these cities within 45 days.

This decision – which follows previous measures to limit educational and cultural travel to Cuba – will hurt Cuban-American families and stifle business opportunities and people-to-people contacts. While Administration officials have claimed to be on the side of the Cuban people, officials have also estimated that the Administration's travel restrictions will reduce the number of American visitors to Cuba by more than half, which is already having devastating consequences for Cuban entrepreneurs.ⁱⁱ

We have profound disagreements with the Cuban Government, as we do with many governments. But rather than returning to the failed policies of the past, we should be working to create opportunities that benefit the people of both our countries. Accordingly, we would appreciate your answers to the following questions:

1. Has the Administration imposed similar restrictions on air travel from the United States to any other country?
2. What objectives does the Administration hope to achieve with these restrictions, within what period of time?
3. What impact do you expect these restrictions will have on the number of Americans, including Cuban-Americans, who travel to Cuba, and what do you expect will be the consequences for private Cuban businesses?

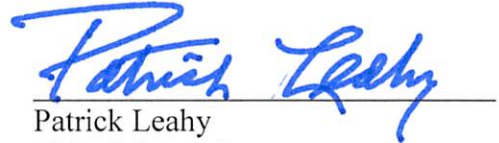
4. In what ways does the Administration believe these restrictions will benefit the people of Cuba or the United States?

We look forward to your response.

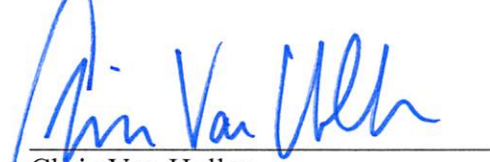
Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



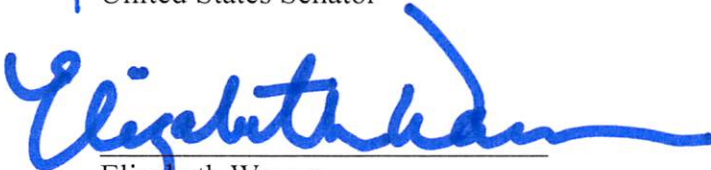
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



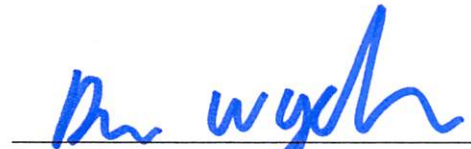
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



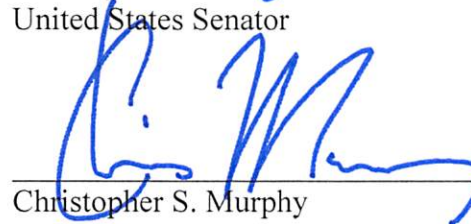
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

ⁱ U.S. Department of State. October 25, 2019. "United States Restricts Scheduled Air Service to Cuban Airports." <https://www.state.gov/united-states-restricts-scheduled-air-service-to-cuban-airports/>

ⁱⁱ Faiola, Anthony. "As Sanctions Bite in Cuba, the U.S. – Once a Driver of Hope – is Now a Source of Pain." *The Washington Post*. June 23, 2019.