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NFTC, USA*Engage Endorse Legislation to Permit Travel to Cuba

Group urges Congress to fix "bizarre imbalance" in U.S. travel policy

In light of the March 31 press conference by Senators Dorgan and Enzi in support of S. 428, The Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act, NFTC Vice President for Global Affairs Jake Colvin released the following statement on congressional efforts to restore regular travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba.

“Americans are extraordinary ambassadors to the world. It’s time to fix this bizarre imbalance in U.S. policy which permits Americans to travel to countries like Iran and North Korea but prohibits them from hopping on a plane to Cuba.

“Sanctions eliminate the positive impact Americans have on the world through everyday activities and interaction with local people. Allowing travel to Cuba would benefit the Cuban people in more ways than one. More travelers to Cuba would mean more money in the hands of ordinary Cubans, while more interactions between the Cuban and American people would promote understanding, respect and shared values.

“From a business perspective, restoring travel to Cuba would benefit the U.S. travel industry immediately and has the potential to boost demand for certain American-made consumer products which are permitted by law to be exported to Cuba under the 2000 Trade Sanctions Reform Act. Changing course on U.S. Cuba policy would also be a shot in the arm for the U.S. image in the world, particularly in Latin America.

“NFTC applauds the leadership of Senators Dorgan, Enzi, Dodd, Lugar and Baucus on reforming U.S. Cuba policy. We urge the Obama Administration to support congressional efforts to restore the ability of U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba, and hope the President will implement measures administratively to roll back restrictions imposed by the Bush Administration.”

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*USA*Engage (www.usaengage.org) is a coalition of small and large businesses, agriculture groups and trade associations working to seek alternatives to the proliferation of unilateral U.S. foreign policy sanctions and to promote the benefits of U.S. engagement abroad. Established in 1997 and organized under the National Foreign Trade Council (www.nftc.org), USA*Engage leads a campaign to inform policy-makers, opinion-leaders, and the public about the counterproductive nature of unilateral sanctions, the importance of exports and overseas investment for American competitiveness and jobs, and the role of American companies in promoting human rights and democracy world wide.*

The National Foreign Trade Council (www.nftc.org) is a leading business organization advocating an open, rules-based global trading system. Founded in 1914 by a broad-based group of American companies, the NFTC now serves hundreds of member companies through its offices in Washington and New York.