NAACP FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE TRAINING MATERIALS

International Affairs

NAACP Medgar Evers
Civil Rights Advocacy Training Institute (CRATI)

NAACP: "PURPOSE, PASSION, POLITICAL ACTION"

Spring, 2018

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ACTION ALERT

DATE: Spring, 2018
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

NAACP SUPPORTS COMPLETELY LIFTING TRADE & TRAVEL BANS ON CUBA

THE ISSUE:
After more than 50 years, the current U.S. restrictions on trade and travel between the United States and Cuba have proven most effective in creating tremendous and on-going hardships for the people of Cuba and hurting American businesspeople and travelers. In fact, the continuation of the embargo on trade between the United States and Cuba has proven itself to be counterproductive as it has made the United States the scapegoat for most of the problems facing Cuba today and in many ways strengthened the resolve of the Cuban people to oppose any changes to their current government.

While the Obama Administration has taken much appreciated, NAACP-supported, aggressive actions to ease the sanctions against Cuba, it will take an act of Congress to completely repeal the bans on trade and travel between the U.S. and Cuba. Sadly, on June 16, 2017, President Trump announced the reversal of many of the actions taken by the Obama Administration. Specifically, the June 2017 actions by President Trump will limit travel to Cuba and restrict U.S. business dealings with Cuba a move that will cost American jobs, hurt our economy, and distance us from one of our closest neighbors. President Trump’s actions return us to policies which have proven most effective in creating on-going hardships for the people of Cuba and America.

Expanding bilateral trade with the Cuban people is one of the most effective ways of influencing change from within Cuba’s society and promoting progress on human rights and democratic rule. Furthermore, since many U.S. trading partners, including all other countries in the Western Hemisphere, trade with Cuba, the affect of the United States policy is to disadvantage United States farmers and businesses that could otherwise compete in the Cuban market.

Given the failure of current U.S. policy, and the resulting hardships on the Cuban people as well as American businesses, general public opinion has shifted; polls show that the majority of Americans now support lifting the embargos. This is reflected in the fact that many leading newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune and the Orlando (Florida) Sentinel Tribune, have come out in opposition to current U.S. policy towards Cuba. As the Orlando Sentinel recently argued, “The ban on U.S. travel is futile, self-defeating, a waste of scarce resources and inconsistent with other American policies.”

Votes on the individual trade and travel bans may occur at any time in both the House and Senate again this year. Furthermore, the NAACP supports legislation by Congressman Jose Serrano (NY), H.R. 574, the “Cuba Reconciliation Act” and S. 1699, the “United States – Cuba Trade Act of 2017” by Senator Ron Wyden (OR) which would completely lift the trade and travel embargos.
(date)

The Honorable __________________________
United States Senate / House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510 / 20515

RE: LIFTING AMERICAN TRADE AND TRAVEL EMBARGOS ON CUBA

Dear Senator / Representative __________________________:

I am writing to encourage you, in the strongest terms possible, to support the lifting of the current American trade and travel bans on Cuba. After more than 50 years, the current U.S. restrictions on trade and travel between the U.S. and Cuba have proven most effective in creating tremendous and on-going hardships for the people of Cuba, hurting American businesspeople and travelers and making the U.S. a scapegoat for all of the island nation’s problems. Specifically, I support legislation like H.R. 574 in the House and S. 1699 in the Senate to completely lift the trade and travel embargos. Short of that, I also support various amendments in the House and Senate to end these short-sighted bans.

Given the failure of current U.S. policy, and the resulting hardships on the Cuban people as well as American businesses, general public opinion has shifted; polls show that the majority of Americans, as well as many well-respected newspapers and the majority of both the U.S. House and Senate now support lifting the embargos. Expanding bilateral trade and person-to-person interaction with the Cuban people are perhaps the most effective ways of influencing change from within Cuba’s society and promoting progress on human rights and democratic rule.

Again, I hope that you will support lifting the embargos and reversing 50 years of failed policy. Please contact me soon and let me know of your position on this issue as well as what you are doing to help the people of Cuba, and correct America’s failed foreign policy.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)
ISSUE BRIEF

DATE: Spring, 2018
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau

NAACP’S INTERNATIONAL POLICY AGENDA FROM 1909 TO THE PRESENT

THE ISSUE:
Since our founding, the NAACP tirelessly supported globally recognized human and civil rights concerns throughout the world. In support of this aim, the NAACP has been involved in multiple international initiatives from 1909 through to the present.

Currently, the NAACP actively engages in advocacy and education before the United States Congress, the Administration, the United Nations and other international bodies, and foreign nations on a plethora of issues. These actions include working with members of the Congress and the Administration and their staff members in the crafting of policy and legislation; testifying and working with the United Nations to develop policies, protocols, covenants, and treaties; drafting and delivering testimony before the United State Congress; and creating and distributing Action Alerts, Issue Briefs and Issue Updates aimed at informing, educating, and engaging NAACP Members and the American public about different issues and how they can be more actively involved in making improvements.

Below is a list of highlights of NAACP activities in the international arena from 1909 to the present.

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1947 On behalf of the NAACP, DuBois organized the preparation of a 155 page petition, "An Appeal to the World," documenting the history of racism in America, which was presented to the United Nations. The NAACP petition was debated for two days at a meeting in Geneva of the Drafting Committee of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

1948 Walter White worked to have the American delegation to the UN support a UN Trusteeship for Somaliland, a former Italian colony in Africa.

1949 April, NAACP sponsored a conference on colonialism and called for the independence of Indonesia.

1951 NAACP Counsel Thurgood Marshall investigated complaints by Black G.I.'s in segregated units in Korea.

1958 During 1958 the NAACP first became affiliated with the United Nations as a non-governmental organization. Following the move of the headquarters to Baltimore, the membership became dormant and in the late 1990's was renewed.

1968 Roy Wilkins was designated Chairman of the US delegation to the International Conference on Human Rights, which met in Tehran, Iran under the auspices of the United Nations. Mr. Wilkins presented the American position on human rights to the Convention.

1978 January NAACP Board adopted a series of recommendations on Africa, called upon US government to take strong action against South Africa to end apartheid.

In July, Dr. Andrew Brimmer announced the creation of an NAACP Economic Policy Advocacy Council. This represented a major effort by the NAACP to develop a cohesive economic strategy for black people in the United States and abroad.

1978 NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks presented the NAACP Task Force on Africa Report to the Chair of the Special Committee against Apartheid at the United Nations on June 1.

1981 NAACP called for the release of 2,700 Haitian refugees from US Detention camps and co-sponsored a March in Washington to demonstrate before the White House.

1985 NAACP sponsored a massive anti-apartheid rally with the city of New York. More than 10,000 people participated.
2014 An NAACP delegation traveled to Geneva, Switzerland, to participate in the U.N. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We also signed onto several shadow reports and submitted one on behalf of the NAACP.

2014 The NAACP submitted a shadow report to the UN Committee for the Elimination on Racial Discrimination (CERD) and made plans to send a delegation to Geneva, Switzerland to the CERD conference in August, 2014.