



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States of America
The White House
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, District of Columbia, 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Over the past weeks we have collectively heard the resounding cries for freedom and justice from the peoples of Cuba and Haiti through protests by Americans, Cubans, and Haitians of all possible backgrounds.

In Haiti, we have seen an elected president murdered, leaving his country without an elected government or a stable line of succession—an invitation to chaos, continued injustice, and tyranny by the terror of civil war, only made worse by the recent succession of natural disasters. And over these past weeks, we have seen the bravery of the Cuban people, who have taken to the streets to demand freedom. Their cry is poignant and powerful: “Libertad!”

They are demanding freedom from communism, repression, misery, and despair. And the Cuban people continue to demand freedom despite the beatings, bullets, and the brutality that the Communist regime has used against them throughout the nation-wide internet shut down.

Both nations face different challenges, but both require a common ingredient: powerful and principled American leadership.

We know that when American leadership is absent in the Western Hemisphere, it invites the influence and intervention of outside actors whose own ideology and interests run counter to the very values, history, and freedoms of the peoples of the Americas. They need our help, and they need our leadership.

America has always served as a singular role model and influence for Haiti and her people. Haitians have played a role in our own history, coming to the aid of our continental army as it fought for our independence. And our American republic served as an inspiration for Haiti’s founders as it declared independence by simultaneously breaking the yoke of slavery and colonialism. Even today, Haitian Americans contribute immensely to our society, our economy, and our culture. Their progress has been a story of bravery and sacrifice with America at her side.

The assassination of Haiti’s president was both an attack on democracy and Haiti’s people. It has undercut the functioning of a stable line of succession in government and has further damaged the integrity of elected government, operating under the rule of law. Just as past American governments have come to the aid of our sister republic in Haiti, we must take the initiative in facilitating free, constitutional, and internationally monitored elections in Haiti. We must actively influence the various stakeholders both abroad and within Haiti to restore the rule of law, to restore a nationally elected government, and to advance the continued economic recovery of the Western Hemisphere’s second republic.

America also has a special relationship with Cuba and her people. We offered refuge to Cuban patriots when they fought for independence against Spain. We stood with them as allies in winning Cuban independence at the Battle of San Juan Hill. We

have a shared history of sacrifice and support for the advance of freedom in the Americas. And now, we must stand with them again for freedom.

We urge the United States to aggressively advocate for the re-establishment of free internet access between Cuba and the rest of the world.

We urge you to lead an international coalition to pressure the Cuban government to embrace democratic, internationally monitored elections and through tough, aggressive economic sanctions strive to liberate the Cuban people.

This cannot be a partisan issue nor an isolated one. This is a larger question of American leadership in the Americas.


Will we retreat within ourselves, or will we stand with our neighbors?

Will we advance the spread and strength of freely elected governments and human rights, or will we allow tyranny and despotism reassert themselves in the Americas?

We must respond with a bold act of leadership that advances freedom and ensures stability in the Western Hemisphere.

The call to action is clear; and the time for action is now. We urge you to side with the Haitian and Cuban peoples, and to side with continued advance of freedom— Vive La Liberte/ Viva La Libertad!

Sincerely,



Nan Whaley
Mayor of Dayton
President



Francis X. Suarez
Mayor of Miami
Vice President



Hillary Schieve
Mayor of Reno
2nd Vice President



Bryan Barnett
Mayor of Rochester Hills
Former President



Mayor Stephen Benjamin
Mayor of Columbia
Former President



Greg Fischer
Mayor of Louisville
Former President



Elizabeth Kautz
Mayor of Burnsville
Former President



Tom Cochran
Executive Director & CEO