

NNOC Statement on President Obama's March trip to Cuba

The National Network On Cuba looks forward to President Obama's visit to Cuba on March 21 and 22, 2016. This visit is historic not just because it will be the first time since 1928 that a United States President has been to Cuba, but more importantly because it represents another step in the efforts to improve relations that began with the December 17, 2014 announcements by President Castro and President Obama.

Despite the measures that President Obama has taken, the economic, commercial and financial blockade continues to be enforced, the full establishment of bi-lateral trade and commerce has not taken place, the Cuban Adjustment Act remains in effect and funding for regime change has not ended. Despite the plans to restore commercial air flights to Cuba, the right of the United States people to travel without restrictions is still denied. The notorious Guantanamo prison remains open and the territory has still not been returned to Cuba. Cuban lifesaving pharmaceuticals are not available to the United States people and Cubans continued to be denied access to many medicines patented in the United States.

We urge President Obama to take full advantage of this opportunity to meet with the Cuban people and their government and to engage in mutually respectful dialogue while recognizing and accepting differences. We are certain that President Obama will experience the warmth of the Cuban people and their desire for an even more positive relationship as equal partners and neighbors.

It is critical that members of the National Network on Cuba continue to demand that our Senators and Representatives in Congress lift the U. S. economic blockade of Cuba. We urge all members to call or visit their Representatives on March 21 and March 22 and tell them to vote in favor of legislation to end the blockade. We also urge member

organizations to participate in the Second Days of Actions Against the Blockade in Washington DC from April 18-22 and to personally bring our message to the Hill to end the blockade against Cuba.

The majority of United States people want normal diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba. The majority of United States people see Cuba in a favorable light according to a recent Gallop poll. We must remind our elected officials in Washington that it is time for them to take action to end all aspects of the blockade. Let's show Washington our faces; let's make Washington hear our voices. We are the people who want and demand a just policy toward Cuba.

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