

DRAFT

City Attorney's Office

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

Resolution No. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBERS REBECCA KAPLAN and ABEL GUILLEN

RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO END THE TRADE EMBARGO ON CUBA

WHEREAS, in 1962, the United States government imposed an economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2015, Presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro shook hands for the first time at the Summit of the Americas in Panama, signaling a shift in diplomatic relations since the two countries severed their ties decades ago; and

WHEREAS, in March 2016, President Obama was the first sitting U.S. President to visit the island of Cuba in over eighty years, and

WHEREAS, on July 20, 2015 diplomatic relations were officially restored between the U.S. and Cuba and a new era of relations between the two countries were re-established when both re-opened their respective embassies; and

WHEREAS, remittance and travel restrictions for U.S. citizens have been eased; and

WHEREAS, the embargo harms the citizens of Cuba who suffer as a result of the policy, not the government; and

WHEREAS, we are in the 21st century and the U.S. embargo against Cuba is a policy of the Cold War era that has not achieved its goal; and

WHEREAS, free trade, exchanges, travel, and business opportunities between the two nations would be a far more affective policy; and

WHEREAS, the embargo has inhibits the exchange of ideas, medicine, culture, the development of sports relations, investment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Cuba is one of the world's developing countries, the embargo has had a tremendously crippling affect and has adversely impacted Cuba's development as a nation; and

WHEREAS, the embargo denies citizens of both Cuba and the United States access to each respective country's medical technology and advancements and denies the exchange of vital medicines and equipment that could lead to improved health for the people of both nations; and

WHEREAS, Cuba has been a friendly international neighbor by exporting and doctors and medicines to other developing nations to combat diseases like Ebola and other international epidemics plaguing some of the most impoverished nations on the planet; and

WHEREAS, Cuba poses no threat to the United States; and

WHEREAS, the 1996 Helms Burton Act extended the territorial application of the initial embargo to apply to foreign companies trading with Cuba; and

WHEREAS, the embargo continues to inflict hardship on the men, women and children of Cuba by creating shortages of food and medicines and impedes financial and trade opportunities with global partners; and

WHEREAS, 191 countries voted at the United Nations General Assembly in October 2015 in favor of lifting the U.S. embargo against Cuba, with only two countries — the United States and Israel — opposed; and

WHEREAS, for 24 consecutive years, since 1992, the UN General Assembly has passed a resolution condemning the impacts of the embargo and proclaiming that the embargo is a violation of the United Nations Charter and contrary to international law; and

WHEREAS, many believe the embargo has a negative effect on the international opinion and the reputation of the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, many people of the United States and in the world believe this embargo is ineffective, inhumane and is in violation of U.S. laws and international conventions; and

WHEREAS, human rights groups including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have all been extremely critical of the embargo; and

WHEREAS, it has been estimated that the embargo has cost the U.S. over \$1 billion dollars in lost sales of commercial exports to the island and allows other countries to take in the market shares from the U.S. industry; and

WHEREAS, ending the embargo will create jobs in the U.S. and will create new economic opportunities with the export of technology, food, medicine, and other goods; and

WHEREAS, the embargo is antithetical to the American ideas of security, sovereignty, free trade and markets, and one of the countries most sacred documents, namely, the Declaration of Independence, which endows all men with certain unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the City Council of Oakland, California, hereby urges the United States Congress to end the trade embargo on Cuba and officially supports H.R. 664: the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act of 2015, H.R. 3238: the Cuba Trade Act of 2015, S.299 the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act of 2015, and S.491 The Freedom to Export to Cuba Act, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City Council of Oakland, California directs the Council President to send a letter to the Honorable Barbara Lee, Member of Congress, (CA-13), the Honorable Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator –CA, and the Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator -CA, on behalf of the City setting forth the concerns described above and position of the Council.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, _____

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - BROOKS, CAMPBELL WASHINGTON, GALLO, GUILLEN, KALB, KAPLAN,
REID AND PRESIDENT GIBSON MCELHANEY

NOES –
ABSENT –
ABSTENTION –

ATTEST:

LATONDA SIMMONS
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the City
of Oakland, California