

# CUBA STUDY GROUP

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **STATEMENT ON THE NEW CUBA REGULATIONS**

The regulations announced yesterday are highly counterproductive. Instead of supporting the Cuban private sector, as the administration has stated, new travel rules harm Cuban entrepreneurs and their employees by making it more difficult for individual Americans to visit the island and patronize their businesses. Rather than deal a lasting blow to the Cuban military, the ban on U.S. interaction with 180 Cuban state enterprises imposes unwieldy, and arguably unenforceable, regulatory burdens on U.S. citizens. More generally, these measures represent a setback to the broader process of normalization, which continues to be overwhelmingly popular with both the U.S. and Cuban people.

The Cuba Study Group disagrees, in particular, with the Trump administration's decision to ban non-academic educational and individual people-to-people travel. The free flow of people, ideas, information, and goods helps, rather than hinders, the cause of meaningful reform on the island. Moreover, U.S. travelers frequent privately-owned rooms and other small businesses at a higher rate than visitors from any other country. President Trump's measures will therefore hit the island's private sector hardest, not the government, as tourists from other countries will continue to patronize state-owned companies and hotels.

Raúl Castro is slated to step down from the presidency in early 2018. At the same time, the country's internal economic agenda has stagnated, and Hurricane Irma just devastated wide swaths of the island's northern coast. At this juncture of uncertainty and transition, it is in the best interest of the United States to remain engaged as the island confronts multiple challenges. By providing the Cuban government an excuse to revive a siege mentality, the Trump administration's policies ultimately favor those in Cuba in a position to benefit most from the status quo where essential economic and political reforms continue to be neglected. As in the pre-normalization era, the Cuban people, and not the Cuban government, will most keenly feel the results.

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*The Cuba Study Group is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, comprised of business and professional individuals with a deeply rooted love for Cuba and the Cuban people. We aim to put our collective experience in leadership skills, problem solving, and wealth creation at the service of the Cuban people. We aim to facilitate change, help empower individuals and promote civil society development.*

*Our mission is to help facilitate peaceful change in Cuba leading to a free and open society, respect for human rights and the rule of law, a productive, market-based economy and the reunification of the Cuban nation.*