

Linda M. Dempsey

Vice President

International Economic Affairs

June 14, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Mikulski, Chairman Boozman and Ranking Member Coons:

The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the largest manufacturing association in the United States representing manufacturers in every industrial sector and in all 50 states, strongly supports efforts to open up trade and travel opportunities with Cuba in order to support the country's ongoing economic and political transformation.

Manufacturers know the power of free enterprise to raise living standards and the importance of choice in working where one chooses, and they are committed to sharing with the Cuban people the values that make America exceptional: free enterprise, competitiveness, individual liberty and equal opportunity. The core American values of enterprise, property rights and rule of law are not only the conditions that create growth and prosperity, they are the necessary foundation for personal and political liberty. With a more open commercial relationship, manufacturers in the United States can bring innovation to Cuba's emerging private sector.

Facilitating trade and travel with Cuba – including measures to lift the ban on private banks and companies from offering credit for agricultural exports to Cuba, repeal the prohibition on vessels that enter a port or place in Cuba from loading or unloading freight at any place in the United States within 180 days without a license, or end the restrictions on tourist travel to Cuba – will allow for increased economic activity between the two nations and facilitate engagement with would-be entrepreneurs who are clamoring to create opportunities in Cuba and transform the island. Since December 2014, the U.S. government has eased restrictions on exports to the Cuban private sector, allowed trade in key sectors and issued changes to facilitate authorized travel to the island. The Cuban government should respond to these changes by allowing U.S. companies to trade directly with the emerging Cuban private sector and by continuing market-oriented reforms that facilitate foreign investment.

Leading Innovation. Creating Opportunity. Pursuing Progress.

Manufacturers understand that commercial exchange between the U.S. and Cuban private sectors will bring shared benefits. The NAM supports the ongoing efforts to achieve normal trade relations with Cuba, and we strongly encourage Congress to advance legislation that will open trade and investment opportunities for manufacturers in the United States and support those Cubans who are seeking new economic and political opportunities. The recent changes in the relationship with Cuba represent a tremendous opportunity, as a way both to promote U.S. values of free enterprise and individual liberty to the Cuban people and to strengthen U.S. manufacturing at home.

We appreciate your efforts to advance this important issue as part of the FY2017 Financial Services, General Government Appropriations bill, and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure manufacturers can fully realize the potential of our bilateral economic relationship.

Sincerely,



Linda Dempsey