



Right to Travel to Cuba

An Occasional Newsletter

July 2010

Before the holiday, I wanted to confirm that an important step forward was taken on Wednesday by the House Agriculture Committee to restore our right to travel to Cuba.

The bill could go directly to the floor of the House after the Independence Day recess or might also be marked up by the Foreign Affairs Committee.

In either case, the next week is a good time to pursue your Representative and Senators while they are in the District.

Thanks for anything you were able to do regarding the Ag Committee and now with your own elected representatives.

Have a great 4th of July,

John McAuliff



P.S. Some of the following is modified or repeated from my previous post.

Ag Committee Approves Trade and Travel, Floor Vote Expected in July

The House Agriculture Committee approved HR 4645 by a bipartisan vote of 25 to 20.

Opponents, most of whom benefited from Miami PAC contributions, introduced several amendments intended to eliminate or cripple the travel provisions. However Chairman Collin Peterson ruled all were out of order as only the sections relating to agriculture were subject to mark-

up by his committee. (As stated in the official Congressional web site, bills are "Referred ... for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.")

All of Peterson's procedural rulings were sustained on roll call votes. Then a final tally was taken on whether to send the bill to the House floor. Four of the twenty-five who voted aye were Republicans; six of the twenty nays were from Democrats.

While the Foreign Affairs and Financial Services Committees can exercise jurisdiction, committee chairs have the power to waive that right. Chairs Howard Berman and Barney Frank both support ending travel restrictions and may be ready for the bill to go the floor without additional debate in their committees.

An opponent of travel correctly observed in the Ag Committee meeting that as a result, travel provisions will not be subject to modification except by the whole House.

The membership of the Foreign Affairs Committee (full list [here](#)) merits special attention as it includes some of the most passionate enemies of travel.

The best prediction is that the full House will have a stormy debate and vote on travel between the July and August recesses (July 12 - August 8).

Timing on the Senate side is less predictable. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) is expected to stage an emotional last stand. but the Hill reported:

Sens. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) and Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) said they believe they have the 60 votes necessary to overcome a filibuster and lift the travel ban ...

The pair said they have 40 co-sponsors for their bill to lift the travel ban, and that they plan to move forward with their bill "in the remaining weeks of the legislative session," according to a joint release.

Please try to arrange a diverse delegation or personal appointment during the District Work Period (July 5-9). Local Congressional and Senatorial office schedules should be checked for Independence Day celebrations, town meetings and other public events where a private conversation can be held or a question asked.

Members who have cosponsored HR 874, HR 4645, S 428, and/or S 1089 need to receive warm appreciation, reminders of how important this vote will be and a request they reach out to other members of the state delegation. Those who have not cosponsored deserve attention both directly and through influential supporters and donors. Faxes and letters to the district or state office do help. Most Representatives and Senators offer an e-mail form, but only for constituents, on their web sites.

Lists of cosponsors and the text of legislation can be seen at www.thomas.org (insert bill number in search box). Check if your Representative and Senators have received PAC donations from south Florida at opensecrets.org .