



THE LEGISLATURE  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

October 30, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington DC, 20003

Senator Charles Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

We write as legislators from the State of New York, to request that you act immediately to lift the cruel and unjustified economic blockade against Cuba, reverse the restrictions imposed by the Trump administration (including President Trump’s unfounded designation of Cuba as a supposed “State Sponsor of Terrorism”), and join the rest of the world in recognizing the cruelty and ineffectiveness of these radical policies.

On June 22, 2023, the New York City Council passed a resolution calling upon “the United States Congress and President to end the Cuban embargo and Cuban travel ban and to remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list due to the unjust harm it causes to the Cuban people.” Similar resolutions have been formally passed in [Baltimore](#), [Boston](#), [Chicago](#), [Cleveland](#), [Hartford](#), [Helena](#), [Minneapolis](#), [New Haven](#), [Pittsburgh](#), [St. Paul](#), [Washington, D.C.](#), and many other cities across the United States. Likewise, the state legislatures of Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota have passed resolutions calling for an end to the blockade. As the Alabama resolution ([SJR43](#)) points out, this comprehensive and cruel economic blockade is harmful both to the people of Cuba, and also to the people of the United States.

**We join the New York City Council—and all these other legislatures—in making this same demand to end the blockade, lift the travel restrictions, and reverse the Trump administration’s policies (including the SSOT designation).** Three years ago, you had promised to “promptly reverse the failed Trump policies that have inflicted harm on the Cuban people and done nothing to advance democracy and human rights.” We ask that you promptly follow through on this promise, and that you finally end the decades-long practice of cruelty against the Cuban people.

Within New York, we know that there is a tremendous value to normalizing relations with Cuba. In particular, New York has an opportunity to collaborate with universities and medical schools in Cuba for the betterment of the people residing in both countries. In [April 2015](#), New York State sent its first delegation in fifty-six years to Cuba. The Governor and representatives of the State University of New York (SUNY) system toured the island, noting the ill-effects of the economic blockade, and the opportunities for collaboration. Representatives from the SUNY system were invited to create a dialogue with our higher education colleagues in Cuba, where the University of Havana developed a memorandum of understanding with SUNY, to expand beneficial study-abroad programs and increase scholarly exchanges. In [February 2017](#), a delegation of twenty leaders and educators from seven SUNY campuses made a return trip to Cuba, meeting with six of Cuba's regional universities to explore possibilities for collaboration, and ultimately signed a new memorandum of understanding regarding their partnership. There is a tremendous appetite for this type of positive engagement, but collaboration has been repeatedly stifled by a cruel, unjustified, and obviously ineffective policy of economic sanctions.

These opportunities for collaboration could be tremendously beneficial for the people of both New York and Cuba. More than a decade ago, the Centro de Inmunología Molecular (CIM) in Havana developed a vaccine used to treat non-small-cell lung carcinoma (NSCLC). In 2018, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center launched the first-ever joint venture between United States and Cuban partners, right here in New York, to increase collaboration between Buffalo scientists and the CIM. This new joint venture ("Innovative Immunotherapy Alliance S.A."), gives Roswell Park access to unique approaches to treating some of the most deadly and burdensome cancer types both in the U.S. and across the world. This type of collaboration, which has only barely been achieved through burdensome and difficult processes, needs to be expanded. New York and Cuba can collaborate much more effectively on projects like these if the blockade is lifted.

Every year since 1992, for more than thirty years, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted an annual resolution calling for an end to the economic blockade that the United States has imposed on the island of Cuba. Every year, the resolution gathers overwhelming support across the world; just last year, the resolution passed by a recorded vote of one hundred and eighty-five countries in favor of the resolution, to only two countries opposed. According to the [United Nations](#), and the overwhelming consensus of world opinion, the need to lift the blockade is as urgent as ever, due to global food and fuel crises that have negatively impacted Cuba, and particularly in light of the fact that the "cumulative

economic damage has amounted to \$154.22 billion at current prices.” In addition to lifting the blockade, we further ask that the United States join the rest of the world this year, and **vote in favor of the United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning the economic blockade of Cuba**, so that we can officially recognize the harm that has been done, and move forward effectively as partners.

Sincerely,



Sen. Jabari Brisport  
Senate District 25

Sen. Julia Salazar  
Senate District 18

Sen. Andrew Gounardes  
Senate District 26

Sen. Liz Krueger  
Senate District 28

Sen. Cordell Cleare  
Senate District 30

Sen. Gustavo Rivera  
Senate District 33

Sen. Nathalia Fernandez  
Senate District 34

Sen. Kristen Gonzalez  
Senate District 59

AM Yudelka Tapia  
Assembly District 86

AM Karines Reyes  
Assembly District 87



AM Jessica González-Rojas  
Assembly District 34

AM Steven Raga  
Assembly District 30

AM Zohran Mamdani  
Assembly District 36

AM Catalina Cruz  
Assembly District 39

AM Robert Carroll  
Assembly District 44

AM Emily Gallagher  
Assembly District 50

AM Marcela Mitaynes  
Assembly District 51

AM Stefani Zinerman  
Assembly District 56

AM Phara Souffrant Forrest  
Assembly District 57

AM Deborah Glick  
Assembly District 66

AM Sarahana Shresta  
Assembly District 103

AM Dan Levenberg  
Assembly District 95

AM Phil Steck  
Assembly District 110

AM Manny De Los Santos, MSW  
Assembly District 72

AM Harvey Epstein  
Assembly District 74

# **Attachment A**



# The New York City Council

City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

## Legislation Text

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File #: Res 0285-2022, Version: A

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### Res. No. 285-A

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress and President to end the Cuban embargo and Cuban travel ban and to remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list due to the unjust harm it causes to the Cuban people.

By Council Members Barron, Cabán, Brewer, Restler, Hanif, Bottcher, Nurse, Krishnan, Avilés, Stevens, Hudson, Rivera, Williams, Gutiérrez, Richardson Jordan, Riley, Marte, Ossé, Farias, Louis, Joseph, Won, Sanchez, Narcisse and the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams)

Whereas, The United States (U.S.), virtually since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959, has unsuccessfully sought to assassinate former Cuban President Fidel Castro over 600 times, according to Fabián Escalante, former chief of Cuban counterintelligence, through a variety of overt as well as covert means, such as the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961; and

Whereas, Most notoriously, the U.S., in the hope of isolating Cuba and starving the Cuban people into rebellion, has maintained an economic blockade, or embargo, of Cuba, which was first imposed in 1960 during the Eisenhower administration and which is the longest economic embargo in history; and

Whereas, Recent decades have witnessed steadily growing opposition to the U.S.'s Cuban embargo, both internationally and domestically; and

Whereas, Every year since 1992, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly has adopted a resolution declaring the embargo a violation of the both the Charter of the United Nations and international law; and

Whereas, In November 2022, UN General Assembly Member States voted for the 30th year in a row in favor of the resolution, this time with 185 Member States voting in favor, two against, and two abstaining; and

Whereas, Ending both the Cuban embargo and the travel ban would be of great benefit to the U.S. and Cuba, particularly in the areas of medical and biotechnological research, economic opportunities, education,

health care, the arts, music, sports, and tourism; and

Whereas, New York City (NYC) would greatly benefit from the restoration of trade with Cuba both through the exportation of products and services to this neighboring country of over 11 million people and through the importation of Cuban products useful to NYC, such as life-saving medicines and vaccines; and

Whereas, NYC's citizens and residents as well as its institutions and businesses are negatively affected by the embargo and travel ban's restrictions as they violate the right to travel and harm economic opportunities that enhanced trade with Cuba would initiate; and

Whereas, The U.S. Congress is urged to promulgate and pass legislation that will finally and fully end the unsuccessful 63-year-old economic, financial, and commercial embargo as well as the travel restrictions on U.S. citizens and residents to Cuba and the restrictions on Cuban citizens to the U.S.; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York call upon the United States Congress and President to end the Cuban embargo and Cuban travel ban and to remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list due to the unjust harm it causes to the Cuban people.

Session 12  
LS 8513  
05/25/23

Session 11  
CD  
LS 12227-12563  
Res. 1092-2019