

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CUBA LIBERTY BILL UPDATE

DOLE URGES COLLEAGUES TO KEEP PRESSURE ON CASTRO,
OPPOSE DEMOCRAT FILIBUSTER,
CUBA, NOT U.S., SHOULD CHANGE ITS POLICY

The Senate is stuck in a filibuster of the Cuba Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1995. Unfortunately, some have decided to make this a partisan issue. The White House has unleashed a lobbying barrage. This should not be a partisan issue. The House passed similar legislation with strong bipartisan support -- including Minority Leader Gephardt's vote. There are Democratic co-sponsors of the pending legislation -- Senators Graham, Lieberman, Hollings, Robb, and Reid. I have no doubt that more Democratic Senators would support the bill if we could get to a vote. I hope the minority will allow us to vote.

The legislation before us addresses many of the concerns raised by the administration regarding the House version. At least ten substantive changes to address administration concerns have been made in the pending Dole-Helms amendment. This bill will have to go to conference, where the administration will have ample opportunity to air additional concerns. I do not know if the White House or Democratic Senators are aware of the changes that have been made in this bill.

What I believe the Senate should do is speak on the issue of bringing democratic change to Cuba.

Fidel Castro is watching closely what we do today. I know the last thing any member wants to do is send Castro a signal of approval for his refusal to change. But we should be clear -- many of the opponents of this legislation have always opposed the embargo on Cuba, and have always wanted sanctions on Castro lifted. That is not President Clinton's stated policy, and it is not a policy that would receive more than a few votes in this body.

There are legitimate concerns on the legislation. That is why Chairman Helms has made so many substantive changes in the legislation. Virtually all the issues raised by the White House in the statement of administration policy have already been addressed.

The winds of freedom have been blowing throughout our hemisphere. Dictators have fallen, political prisoners have been freed, and democracies have flourished. Only one country has bucked the democratic tide: Castro's Cuba. Only one country continues to repress its own people in the name of the failed dream of Communism: Castro's Cuba. No one should believe that Castro will change willingly. No one should believe that Castro will respond to eased pressure. After thirty years of totalitarian rule and support for terrorism, it is not the United States that should change its policy -- it is Cuba that should change. And Cuba will only change if the United States, the leader of the free world, keeps the pressure on Fidel Castro. I urge my colleagues to oppose the filibuster of this bill, and support democratic change in Cuba.

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* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 1:45 p.m.