



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**  
**Wednesday, April 2, 2003**

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Below is a letter, regarding U.S. relations with Cuba, which Senator Baucus and nine of his colleagues sent to the Cuban Interest Section in Washington DC. Please be advised that Senator Baucus will be speaking at The Carter Center in Atlanta, on Friday April 4, 2003 11 a.m., to discuss U.S. Engagement of Cuba.

April 2, 2003

Dear Mr. Rodriguez,

As you may know, a bipartisan group of Senators recently announced the formation of a Senate Working Group on Cuba. This group will work to ease the trade and travel restrictions that have been in place for the last forty years.

However, as members of the Working Group - and as advocates for improved relations between the United States and Cuba - we are deeply troubled by recent actions of the Cuban government against Cuban dissidents. Dozens of Cuban citizens have been arrested or threatened with arrest for promoting human rights or practicing independent journalism. These arrests are deplorable, and we hope that your government will immediately release these dissidents. Unless corrected, the recent actions of the Cuban government will only undermine efforts to expand contacts between the two countries.

In addition, we understand that the Cuban government has begun to restrict the freedom of movement of U.S. diplomats in Cuba. There are reports that the Cuban government may impose further restrictions on U.S. diplomats - or even close the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. This, in our view, would be a tremendous mistake. Indeed, the increasing tensions between the Cuban government and the U.S. Interests Section in Havana only threaten to deteriorate further our diplomatic relationship. We in Congress

believe that the U.S. Interests Section in Havana should follow all diplomatic norms in order to lessen tensions between our two governments, and your government should do its part to bring about a lessening of tensions as well. The current state of relations serves neither country.

Sincerely,

Max Baucus

Michael Enzi

Byron Dorgan

Norm Coleman

Blanche Lincoln

Jeff Bingaman

Chris Dodd

Pat Roberts

Chuck Hagel