

Cuba Travel Statement 2011

The Alliance of Baptists affirms the January 2011 Presidential directive on travel to Cuba as forward-looking and reflective of the will of U.S. citizens—including the majority of Cuban Americans.

We are grateful for new travel regulations that will:

- Expand purposeful travel by providing general licenses for religious, educational/academic, and cultural travel to Cuba;
- Provide specific licenses for people-to-people travel similar to the licenses that were provided from 1999-2003;
- Allow for non-family remittances of \$500/quarter for private entrepreneurial activities, cultural activities, etc.—such remittances may not be provided to senior members of the Cuban government or members of the Communist Party; and
- Expand charter flights from the United States to include all U.S. international airports—i.e. all U.S. international airports may apply to have charter flights depart from their site.

While the executive directive is a step in the right direction, we encourage President Obama to move even further toward changing our damaging and outdated policy toward Cuba through executive action and through increasing diplomatic initiatives with Cuba. We also urge President Obama to send a strong message to the Congress asking them to repeal the outrageous laws governing U.S. policy toward Cuba, starting with an end to the travel ban that covers ALL Americans.

We also urge President Obama to continue the administration's thorough review of U.S.-Cuba policies, including the trade embargo and its destructive impact on both countries.