



## Center for Responsible Travel

*Transforming the Way the World Travels*

[www.responsibletravel.org](http://www.responsibletravel.org)

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### **U.S. Tour Operators Petition the Trump Administration Not to Tighten U.S. Regulations on Travel to Cuba**

On April 17, 2019, John Bolton, the National Security Advisor, announced the Trump Administration's plan to impose new sanctions and penalties against Cuba, including restricting Americans' ability to travel to the island nation. "The Department of the Treasury will implement further regulatory changes to restrict nonfamily travel to Cuba," he said. "These new measures will help steer Americans' dollars away from the Cuban regime."

The statement suggests that the government will increasingly restrict travel to the island but was not specific enough to provide Americans planning to travel to Cuba or American businesses who operate programs in Cuba with a clear idea of what is possible.

Many private Cuban citizens and small-scale businesses benefitted from the measures that President Obama took to ensure more exchange and travel between our countries. However, the travel industry has seen a decline since President Trump took office and rolled back several key Obama-era policies. As a result, Cuban entrepreneurs are suffering—household-based and other small private Cuban businesses that thrived during the increase in U.S. visitors have shut their doors or are struggling to survive. Furthermore, many U.S. travel companies and educational institutions have also seen a decline in their revenues as a result of the actions of this Administration. In fact, the vast majority of U.S. tour operators strive to comply with U.S. laws and regulations. If there is any non-compliance with the travel regulations, we urge this Administration to pursue productive enforcement means rather than imposing a broad prohibition on valuable people-to-people educational travel to Cuba.

We, the undersigned tour operators involved in authorized U.S. travel to Cuba, urge the National Security Council, the Office of Foreign Assets Control, and the Department of State to maintain the critical people-to-people and educational exchange programs currently in place, allowing both American and Cuban citizens to continue to benefit from valuable face-to-face exchanges, and for the Cuban people to pursue economic independence that provides them with choice and freedom.

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