

As U.S. threatens Cuba and world, Detroit to join cities opposing blockade

written by Cheryl LaBash
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Struggle-La Lucha's Cheryl LaBash speaks in support of Detroit resolution against

Cuba blockade.

Detroit — Events on Feb. 5 demonstrated the profound disconnect between poor and working people and the U.S. government.

In the morning, the city of Detroit's City Council voted unanimously to urge "Congress and the President to immediately end all aspects of the United States' economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, including restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens. Venceremos."

But that evening, Donald Trump's State of the Union address endorsed regime change in Venezuela and the self-appointed, counterrevolutionary Juan Guaidó as president. The Jan. 30 Wall Street Journal characterized the U.S. attack on Venezuela as the first step in ["reshaping Latin America," also aimed at Cuba.](#)

During public comment on the Detroit resolution, three people spoke in favor, none opposed. Mike Shane, who traveled to Cuba in October 2017, explained what it was like looking at Cuba through Detroit eyes during his visit. He asked Cubans about foreclosures, evictions and water shutoffs for nonpayment of bills. Cubans reacted with surprise, since they have never experienced anything like that.

Detroit is now the eleventh city to adopt such a resolution, following Richmond, Berkeley, Sacramento and Oakland in California; Helena, Mont.; Minneapolis; and most recently St. Paul, Minn.; Pittsburgh; Brookline, Mass.; and Hartford, Conn. Hartford is the second such city resolution in 2019, following St. Paul on Jan. 23.

U.S. cities are joining international voices to end the decadeslong economic war against socialist Cuba. Since 1992, the majority of countries in the United Nations General Assembly have also called on the U.S. to end its unilateral hostility to its island neighbor. In 2018, 189 countries supported Cuba's resolution with only two opposed — the U.S. and Israel.

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BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE MARY SHEFFIELD AND COUNCIL MEMBER RAQUEL CASTAÑEDA-LÓPEZ:

RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING AN ONGOING COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA

WHEREAS, In 1960, the United States government imposed an economic, commercial, and financial embargo against Caribbean island nation of Cuba; and

WHEREAS, On December 17, 2014, U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro agreed to reestablish diplomatic relations between the two nations; and

WHEREAS, Despite executive actions by President Obama easing certain regulations, the U.S. embargo remains in place, as are restrictions on travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba; and

WHEREAS, The easing of international relations and trade between the United States and Cuba benefit both countries, particularly in the areas of food production, education, healthcare, tourism, the arts, music, and biotechnological and medical research; and

WHEREAS, An end to the embargo would enable not only renewed diplomatic relations allowing for a dialog on human rights, direct travel for the citizens of both countries, direct mail services, but also a significant expansion of international trade; and

WHEREAS, Normalization of relations with Cuba would greatly benefit Michigan's economy including, but not limited to, increased trade opportunities with our automotive industry and agricultural imports and exports. According to a June 17, 2017 report by Michigan Radio, Michigan bean growers specifically expressed optimism about the opening of a new trade market. In 2015, Senator Debbie Stabenow joined a bipartisan group of senators in introducing legislation to end the embargo, following her second official trip to Cuba; and

WHEREAS, However, in September 2017, without any precipitating hostile events, President Trump ordered all diplomatic staff withdrawn from the U.S. Embassy in Havana and expelled diplomatic staff from the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C., signaling a pause, if not the end of normalization efforts between the countries. **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Council urges President Donald Trump to renew negotiations with the Cuban government as initiated by the policy of past administrations to build a new, cooperative relationship between the United States and Cuba and to reestablish the diplomatic staffing in the U.S. Embassy in Havana and enable reinstatement of diplomatic staff at the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C.; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED, The Detroit City Council urges Congress and the President to immediately end all aspects of the United States' economic, commercial, and financial embargo against Cuba, including restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens. **Venceremos. AND BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Clerk transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation, and Mayor Mike Duggan.

January 23, 2019

CITY CLERK 2019 FEB 1 AM 10:45

