



# NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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29 January 2015

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy,

I am writing to you as a fellow law enforcement officer on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police with respect to the Administration's recent announcement that the United States will end current restrictions and seek closer ties to the Republic of Cuba.

You recently led a delegation of U.S. lawmakers to Cuba so it is clear that the Administration will look to you for help and leadership as it seeks to change our relationship with the Cuban government. I am very pleased that this is the case because there is no other member of the United States Senate in whom law enforcement officers have greater confidence and respect. It is for this reason I write to you and seek your help to address an issue related to the normalization of our relations with Cuba that is very important to our nation's law enforcement officers.

Over the years, the FOP has consistently opposed any normalization of relations with this communist nation until such time as that government extradites to the United States the violent criminals who are protected there by the Cuban government. In fact, we wrote to the President about this issue in September 2009 when he first relaxed restrictions on trade and more recently in December 2014.

As a former prosecutor, I think you will agree that this is a reasonable requirement to attach to any positive change in our relationship to the Cuban government. Cuba is still harboring American fugitives, perhaps the most notorious being Joanne Chesimard, who murdered New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster and severely wounded his partner, Trooper James Harper in 1973. She escaped a maximum security prison in 1979 and fled to Cuba, where she now lives under the protection of the Cuban government as an example of "political repression" in the United States. In May 2013, she became the first woman to be added to the "Most Wanted Terrorists" list published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. There is a \$2 million reward, \$1 million each from the Federal government and the State of New Jersey, for information leading to her apprehension.

In addition, Fidel and Raul Castro granted asylum to three members of a group called the "Republic of New Africa," who murdered New Mexican State Trooper Robert Rosenbloom in 1972. One of the three has died, but at least one, Charles Hill, continues to live in comfort in Cuba.

I think all reasonable people would agree that no responsible government should harbor and protect anti-police assassins from justice. The Fraternal Order of Police believes strongly that before any further "normalization" is considered, the Cuban government must return those who murdered U.S. law enforcement officers and then fled our justice system. Simply put, we ought not to reward the Cuban policy of providing a safe haven for the murderers of Americans. For this reason, I am asking you to do whatever you can in your work with the Administration or through the Senate to condition any changes in our relationship on the surrender of these fugitives.

I realize that relationships with other governments are sensitive and complex, which require compromise and accommodation. However, the American people and the Fraternal Order of Police do not feel that we must compromise our system of justice and the fabric of our society to foreign dictators like Fidel and Raul Castro. The blood of American law enforcement officers doing their job on American soil is too high a price to pay for closer ties with the Cuban regime.

On behalf of the more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I thank you for your continued hard work and support of the rank-and-file officers and I look forward to discussing this issue with you further. If I can be of any additional help, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington, D.C. office.

Sincerely,

  
Chuck Canterbury  
National President