

Resolution In Opposition to U.S. Sanctions on Cuba

Whereas, starting in 1960, the U.S. has imposed an increasingly severe economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba, which was intensified by Donald Trump in 2017; and

Whereas, the U.S. blockade often prevents the purchase of necessary educational materials, desks, books, technology which are essential for the teaching-learning process, and even basic resources for building repairs in the schools; and

Whereas, the U.S. blockade has severely restricted collaboration on scientific and medical research that interferes with the potential of saving lives in the face of this pandemic¹, including Cuba's development of four vaccines against Covid-19; and

Whereas, the Professional Staff Congress is an academic union at the City University of New York, a university with the most diverse student body in the U.S., which has educational exchange and solidarity programs with Cuba, restrictions on travel and exchange harm our students and faculty, as well as U.S. and Cuban faculty and students more broadly; and

Whereas, the PSC has worked against U.S. unilateral sanctions since 2018; and

Whereas, for 29 consecutive years the General Assembly of the United Nations has voted overwhelmingly to adopt a resolution in favor of lifting the U.S. embargo against Cuba²; and

Whereas, despite punishing sanctions, Cuba is a country that prioritizes education and spends 13% of its GDP on universal public education, the highest of any nation³; and

Whereas, current U.S. policy undermines the solidarity that Cuba has shown with oppressed communities globally and in the U.S.; and

Whereas, Cuba is providing free medical education to low-income students in the U.S., particularly students of color in underserved communities who are unable to afford medical school⁴; and

¹ <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2020/u-s-economic-sanctions-on-cuba-in-the-context-of-the-pandemic-covid-19/>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/us-continues-vote-against-un-call-end-cuba-embargo-2021-06-23/>

³ <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/25-countries-spending-the-most-on-education.html>

<http://nnoc.info/world-bank-cuba-has-the-highest-investment-in-education-worldwide/> ;
<https://data.humdata.org/dataset/unesco-data-for-cuba>

⁴<https://www.newyorker.com/science/elements/why-african-american-doctors-are-choosing-to-study-medicine-in-cuba>

Whereas, Cuba has a long history of providing international medical aid and healthcare to the peoples of the world, and the Henry Reeve International Brigades were decisive in the fight against Ebola and have stepped forward in many epidemics around the world, including dengue fever, HIV/AIDS, swine flu and hepatitis⁵; and

Whereas, since the outbreak of Covid-19, Cuba has sent 3,700 health workers in 52 international brigades to 39 countries overwhelmed by the pandemic, with requests for assistance from many more countries⁶; and

Whereas, the pandemic has shown that international cooperation is essential for public health, and Cuba has led the way with its medical internationalism and solidarity; and

Whereas, the U.S. has consistently worked to undermine the progress demonstrated above in the educational and medical areas; and

Whereas, shortages and economic hardship caused by U.S. sanctions and the resulting social tensions are used as a pretext for intervention and regime change;⁷

Therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the PSC calls on the Biden Administration and Congress to end the devastating 61-year economic, financial and commercial blockade, as well as travel restrictions on U.S. residents to Cuba and Cuban citizens to the U.S. as so many other unions have done⁸; and

RESOLVED, that we call upon the AFT to educate and mobilize all members and students against these inhumane and unjust policies; and

RESOLVED, we call on the PSC to bring this resolution to the AFT⁹ convention, demanding that they reverse their support for U.S. sanctions against Cuba.

⁵<https://www.coha.org/coha-is-honored-to-nominate-the-cuban-henry-reeve-international-medical-brigade-for-the-2021-nobel-peace-prize/>

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/latamcaribbean/2020/04/08/the-world-rediscovers-cuban-medical-internationalism/>

⁶<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-cuba-doctors/cuba-punches-above-weight-with-white-coat-army-during-pandemic-idUSKBN2651NK>

⁷<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ethics-and-international-affairs/article/abs/smart-sanctions-revisited/14E85413C04EE483370E6A23CB7C7225>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/aug/04/us-freedom-cuba-punishing-sanctions-critics-blockade>

⁸ Albany New York Labor Council; AFSCME 3800, Minnesota; Fresno Central Labor Council, California; ILWU 2021 International Convention; Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council, King County, Washington; National Black Worker Center; Sacramento Central Labor Council, California; San Francisco Labor Council, California; Troy New York Labor Council; Washington State Labor Council

⁹ <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1165&context=classracecorporatpower>