



*Department of Social Development and World Peace*

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July 19, 2005

The Honorable José E. Serrano  
House of Representatives  
2227 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Fax: 225-6001

Dear Mr. Serrano,

I write to express our support for your efforts to ease restrictions on travel to Cuba by Cuban-Americans to assist their relatives there in the aftermath of Hurricane Dennis.

Your resolution, H.Con.Res. 206, expressing the sense of the Congress that the President should temporarily suspend restrictions on remittances, gift parcels and family travel to Cuba, is a laudable example of the humanitarian spirit that ought to be a constant element of our Cuba policy.

Unfortunately, despite repeated Administration expressions of concern for the Cuban people, the recent policies that further restrict the ability of Cubans in this country from aiding their suffering relatives on the island, including most incomprehensibly the limitation of family visits to once every three years instead of annually as before, seem to belie that concern.

It has been the long-standing position of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that the failed economic embargo policy should be dismantled. In recent years, majority votes in both houses of the Congress clearly agree. Until that finally occurs, I pray that your efforts to allow Cubans in the United States to reach out to assist their families affected by the devastation of Hurricane Dennis will succeed.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend John H. Ricard, SSJ  
Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee  
Chairman  
Committee on International Policy