

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA

RESOLUTION NO. 20342

A RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH CUBA AND LIFT THE CURRENT EMBARGO AND OTHER TRADE BARRIERS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA AND EXTENDING A HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TO THE PEOPLE OF CUBA

WHEREAS, for more than five decades, the United States has maintained, through the most comprehensive set of economic sanctions levied against any nation, a strict embargo with the Republic of Cuba which places significant restrictions and prohibitions on U.S.-Cuban relationships, especially in trade, travel, and financial transactions; and

WHEREAS, U.S. laws and regulations make Montana exports to Cuba difficult and burdensome, if not outright prohibited with numerous federal regulations including restrictions on credit, which limit the ability of Montana businesses to competitively serve the Cuban market and allowing international competitors to capitalize; and

WHEREAS, prior to the embargo, the United States accounted for nearly 70 percent of Cuba's international trade and currently, 84 percent of all food consumed in Cuba is imported; and

WHEREAS, According to the United States Chamber of Commerce, the embargo's annual cost to the United States economy

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is \$1.2 billion, and the embargo disproportionately affects American small businesses that lack the transportation, legal, and financial infrastructure to comply with the current regulations; and

WHEREAS, the United States and Cuba are natural trading partners, and Montana stands ready to be a major source for Cuba's domestic consumption, which will result in significant growth in exports and the creation of more American jobs; and

WHEREAS, relaxing restrictions and prohibitions on U.S. exports to Cuba will present new opportunities to grow our agricultural sector and create jobs in rural communities across Montana; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of Cuba, home to more than 11 million people in close proximity to the U.S., is a logical target for expanded U.S. exports, normalizing trade relations between the U.S. and Cuba will enhance Cuban citizens' access to affordable food while providing the U.S. farm and business community with new markets; and

WHEREAS, Cuba has already become a leader in the biopharmaceutical arena, specifically in a lung cancer vaccine,

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treatment of diabetic foot ulcers and in rural delivery of health care, and its vaccine industry will be able to ship more of its high-quality products to Montana to be distributed to underserved populations at lower costs; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that increasing trade with Cuba will better serve our interest and improve the lives of Cubans and their families; and

WHEREAS, since 2008, Cuba has undertaken more than 300 economic reforms designed to encourage private enterprise and small businesses; and

WHEREAS, many of our citizens have visited Cuba and participated in governmental, cultural and human rights exchanges and we recognize that our two countries have much more in common than we have differences; and

WHEREAS, expanding educational exchanges and cultural interactions would create bridges for us to build on and promote mutual awareness, trust, and respect towards one another; and

WHEREAS, ending the U.S. embargo against Cuba will boost both the Cuban and Montana economies and eliminate the barriers between Americans and Cubans by expanding diplomatic relations,

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travel, partnerships, and trade, allowing all citizens the opportunity to discover and reconnect on mutual interests, benefiting Cubans and Americans alike; and

WHEREAS, we welcome and encourage the newfound openness between our nations and wish to extend the hand of friendship to the people of Cuba;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA:

Section 1. That we urge the Congress of the United States to normalize relations with the Cuban government and lift the current embargo and other trade barriers with the Republic of Cuba.

Section 2. Copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of Montana's congressional delegation.

PASSED AND EFFECTIVE BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HELENA, MONTANA, THIS 7th DAY OF JUNE, 2017.

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/S/ JAMES E. SMITH
MAYOR

ATTEST:

/S/ DEBBIE HAVENS
CLERK OF THE COMMISSION