

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to express our disgust with the apparent abuse of regulations regarding so-called “educational activities” under 31 C.F.R. § 515.565(a). We are appalled that on at least one occasion, “educational activities” licensed by your administration reportedly included a meeting between American university students and a fugitive from U.S. justice. Accordingly, we ask that you determine how many such meetings have occurred since the 2011 regulation changes regarding “educational activities” and “people-to-people” travel, and that you take all appropriate measures to ensure that licensed travel (through travel-related transactions to Cuba) do not again facilitate meetings between U.S. travelers and fugitives wanted by the United States.

According to *The Daily Iowan*, the director of the University of Iowa’s Nonfiction Writing Program and an organizer of the university’s upcoming Cuba trip, boasted that, “one of the students on the trip last year wrote an excellent piece on an American fugitive who had escaped the country and taken asylum in Cuba” and “[t]he exile met 13 UI students who had enrolled in the UI’s study abroad program to Cuba last winter.” The University of Iowa’s faculty member did not specify which fugitive met with the Iowa students.

The Cuban regime, a U.S.-designated State Sponsor of Terrorism, has become a haven to a host of American fugitives who have fled U.S. justice to find a comfortable home under the protection of the anti-American Castro dictatorship. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has estimated that there are well over seventy American fugitives receiving safe harbor in Cuba. These fugitives have been charged with, and some convicted of, offenses including hijacking, kidnapping, drug offenses, and murder. Notorious fugitives believed to be receiving safe harbor in Cuba include:

- Joanne Chesimard, who murdered New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster during a routine traffic stop and was convicted of first degree murder, assault and battery of a police officer, assault with a dangerous weapon, assault with intent to kill, illegal possession of a weapon, and armed robbery, remains one of the Top Ten “Featured Fugitives” on the FBI’s Domestic Terrorism List;
- William Guillermo Morales, who is leader and chief bomb-maker for the terrorist organization FALN, participated in the bombings of Fraunces Tavern in Manhattan in 1975 and the Mobil Oil employment office in New York in 1977, which killed five people and injured hundreds more;
- Charles Hill, who is wanted for the killing of Robert Rosenbloom, a New Mexico State Trooper, and the hijacking of a Trans World Airline Boeing 727 aircraft; and

- Victor Manuel Gerena, on the FBI's list of the 'Ten Most Wanted' fugitives for carrying out a brutal \$7 million robbery of a Wells Fargo armored car in Connecticut.

Due to the sheer magnitude of the number of criminals and fugitives who have fled U.S. justice in Cuba, it would be difficult to narrow down which one spoke to those American students during a U.S.-licensed "educational activities" trip to Cuba last year.

It is a perpetual shame that these and so many other fugitives from U.S. justice remain at large just ninety miles from our shores. It is an abomination to surviving victims, their families, and the families of those who were murdered, that an American fugitive remains free in Cuba to apparently spout enemy propaganda to American students by virtue of a license granted by your administration. We sincerely hope that this is not an example of the type of "educational activities" anticipated by your 2011 changes which weakened the regulations enforced by the Treasury Department, and that you will strengthen efforts to guarantee that licensed travel to Cuba will not be used as a tool of the Castro dictatorship to advance its anti-American agenda.

We are appalled by the apparent abuse of the expanded so-called "educational activities" category of travel to Cuba. Within all applicable rules and regulations, we respectfully request that you determine whether the reported meeting with American students and a fugitive from U.S. justice was an isolated incident or whether other licensed travel has included meetings with U.S. fugitives, and that you work to ensure that such abuse of the regulations regarding Cuba travel does not happen again.

Sincerely,



MARIO DIAZ-BALART
Member of Congress



PETER KING
Member of Congress



SCOTT GARRETT
Member of Congress