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GREGORY W. MEEKS, NEW YORK
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SAJIT GANDHI
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

One Hundred Nineteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

April 22, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to express deep concern that the State Department has ostensibly prohibited officials at the U.S. Embassy in Cuba from engaging with members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee travelling to Cuba on official business to conduct oversight regarding the impacts of U.S. policy on the Cuban people. Such a directive represents a troubling departure from long-standing norms of cooperation between the legislative and executive branches in the conduct of American foreign policy.

Prior to the members' trip to Cuba on April 1-5, 2026, members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee requested a meeting with Chargé d'Affaires Mike Hammer at the U.S. Embassy in Havana. It is standard protocol for Members to meet with the U.S. Embassy officials in country to understand fully the goals and mission of the Embassy, and to obtain on-the-ground information about the situation from the Embassy's perspective. In this case, we were also extremely concerned with the wellbeing of the Embassy staff and operations, given the months long U.S. blockade on fuel to the island. The initial request was granted and a meeting tentatively scheduled. However, on April 1, Mr. Hammer informed the delegation that Department leadership directed him not to meet Members or brief them over the phone.

Congressional delegations rely on the support and engagement of U.S. embassy personnel to better understand local conditions, assess policy impacts, and ensure that our diplomatic efforts align with broader national interests. We are particularly concerned about this apparent directive in the context of current U.S. policy toward Cuba as embassy officials serve key roles in facilitating bilateral dialogue. Ambassador Hammer risks undercutting his important championing of freedom of expression and democratic norms for the Cuban people when the

Department is unwilling to hear from and engage Members of Congress that may differ in opinion from the Administration.

Given the ongoing negotiations between the Trump Administration and the Cuban government and threats from President Trump to “take” Cuba, denying members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee access to embassy officials sends a troubling message that the Administration is attempting to block voices that disagree with it.

We request that you provide details regarding the State Department’s obstruction of access for Members of Congress to embassy officials, and provide written answers to the following questions by April 30, 2026:

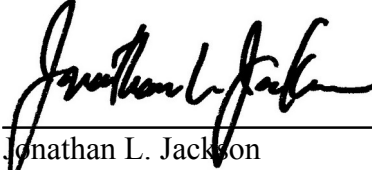
1. Provide copies of any formal or informal communication or directives to officials at the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba with regards to meetings with Members of Congress, including who issued the directive, when it was issued, and whether it was written or verbal.
2. How were embassy officials instructed to respond if approached by Members of Congress for a meeting?
3. Were any consequences outlined for embassy officials who chose to engage with Members of Congress?
4. What is the Department’s rationale for limiting access to embassy officials at the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba?
5. What is the Department’s general policy for facilitating congressional visits with embassy officials abroad?
6. Has the Department issued formal or informal directives to embassy officials at other postings with regards to meeting with Members of Congress?

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



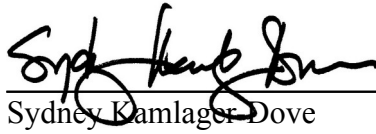
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member
House Committee on Foreign
Affairs



Joaquin Castro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Western
Hemisphere
House Committee on Foreign
Affairs



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress