

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0926**

September 12, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan  
Acting Secretary  
**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan,

I write to express strong disapproval over the recent surge of Cuban deportations and inquire about the ongoing policies related to Cuban nationals living in the United States. The Cuban people have become integral and indispensable parts of communities across the nation, nowhere more than Miami and South Florida. This Administration's systematic removal of Cuban nationals threatens to undermine local economies and break apart families that have built their homes on wholly American values.

Last week, reports indicated that 120 Cuban nationals were simultaneously deported from the United States and returned to Cuba on a single flight; rumors of more mass deportations are circulating across different communities. This mass deportation breaks from years of precedent and the contradictory postures towards Cuba of your Department and this Administration betray the underlying motives for these recent deportations.

Since the signing of the National Security Presidential Memorandum in June of 2017, the Trump Administration has demonized the Cuban government and implemented ideas reminiscent of the Cold War era. Former National Security Advisor John Bolton even labeled Cuba as part of the "troika of tyranny" in 2018. In contrast to this rhetoric, your Department apparently now views Cuba as safe to return those who have sought asylum from communism. The recent deportations demonstrate that the Administration no longer fears that people who fled the communist regime will be persecuted by the Cuban government.

On their face, these two positions are not compatible. Either the Cuban government continues to persecute its own citizens under tyrannical rule, or the Cuban government has reformed enough to safely return those who fled to the United States without fear of retribution – not both. To that end, I request that you answer the following questions relating to your Department's policies towards Cuba and Cuban nationals residing in the United States:

- Please detail your Department's policies towards non-violent, non-criminal, undocumented Cuban nationals residing in the United States. Is it the Department's intention to immediately deport all Cuban national residing in the United States without immigration status?
- When and why was the decision to simultaneously deport 120 Cuban nationals made?

- Does the Department of Homeland Security believe that Cuba is a safe location to return individuals who have sought asylum in the United States?
- Does the Department of Homeland Security believe that there is no possibility that individuals who fled Cuba to the United States will be persecuted by their government upon their return?
- How does the Cuban government's history with human rights abuses in the past decades comport with your Department's recent decision to conduct mass deportations of Cuban nationals?

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell  
Member of Congress