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SENATORS INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO END CUBAN EMBARGO

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A bipartisan group of Senators has introduced legislation to lift the U.S. trade embargo on Cuba.

Senators Amy Klubuchar (D-MN), Mike Enzi (R-WY), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jeff Flake (R-AZ) Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) have cosponsored "The Freedom to Export to Cuba Act".

The bill repeals the current legal restrictions against doing business with Cuba, including the original 1961 authorization for establishing the trade embargo; subsequent laws that required enforcement of the embargo; and other restrictive statutes that prohibit transactions between U.S.-owned or controlled firms and Cuba, and limitations on direct shipping between U.S. and Cuban ports. It does not repeal human rights provisions or provisions relating to property claims against the Cuban government.

Senator Klubuchar, lead author of the bill says, "It is time to turn the page on our Cuba policy." She notes 50 years of the embargo have not secured our interests and disadvantaged American businesses.

Last month the Obama Administration announced an initiative to re-establish relations with Cuba. The U.S. Treasury and Commerce Departments issued new rules relaxing trade and travel restrictions to the island nation as part of that effort. However, it takes an act of Congress to repeal the 1961 trade embargo.