

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS


EMPLOYEE POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM Original Amendment

This form is for disclosing the receipt of travel expenses from private sources for travel taken in connection with official duties. This form does not eliminate the need to report privately-funded travel on the annual *Financial Disclosure Statements* of those employees required to file them. In accordance with House Rule 25, clause 5, **you must complete this form and file it with the Clerk of the House by email at gifttravelreports@mail.house.gov, within 15 days after travel is completed.** Please **do not** file this form with the Committee on Ethics.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Name of Traveler: Keane Bhatt
2. a. Name of Accompanying Relative: _____ **OR** None
b. Relationship to Traveler: Spouse Child Other (specify): _____
3. a. Dates: Departure: 2/19/24 Return: 2/25/24
b. Dates at Personal Expense, if any: 2/23-25 **OR** None
4. Departure City: Washington DC, Miami Destination: Havana Return City: Miami, Washington DC
5. Sponsor(s), Who Paid for the Trip: Center for Democracy in the Americas
Engagements with civil society representatives, entrepreneurs, artists, musicians
6. Describe Meetings and Events Attended: _____
and designers, U.S. and Cuban government officials, agriculturalists, families of detained political dissidents, educators, health officials, Latin American ambassadors
7. Attached to this form are **each** of the following, *signify that each item is attached by checking the corresponding box*:
 - a. a completed *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form*;
 - b. the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* completed by the trip sponsor **prior** to the trip, **including all** attachments **and** the *Additional Sponsor Form(s)*;
 - c. page 2 of the completed *Traveler Form* submitted by the employee; **and**
 - d. the letter from the Committee on Ethics approving my participation on this trip.
8. a. I represent that I participated in each of the activities reflected in the attached sponsor's agenda. *Signify statement is true by checking the box.*
b. If not, explain: _____

I certify that the information contained on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Traveler:  Date: 3-8-24

I authorized this travel in advance. I have determined that all of the expenses listed on the attached *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form* were necessary and that the travel was in connection with the employee's official duties and would not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Name of Supervising Member: Pramila Jayapal Date: 3-14-24

Signature of Supervising Member: 

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

SPONSOR POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM

Original Amendment

This form must be completed by an officer of any organization that served as the primary trip sponsor in providing travel expenses or reimbursement for travel expenses to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. **A completed copy of the form must be provided to each House Member, officer, or employee who participated in the trip within 10 days of their return.** You must answer all questions, and check all boxes, on this form for your submission to comply with House Rules and the Committee's Travel Regulations. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the denial of future requests to sponsor trips and/or subject the current traveler to disciplinary action or a requirement to repay the trip expenses.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Sponsor(s) who paid or provided in-kind support for the trip: _____

2. Travel Destination(s): _____

3. Date of Departure: _____ Date of Return: _____

4. Name(s) of Traveler(s): _____

Note: You may list more than one traveler on a form only if **all** information is **identical** for each person listed.

5. **Actual amount** of expenses paid on behalf of, or reimbursed to, each individual named in Question 4:

	Total Transportation Expenses	Total Lodging Expenses	Total Meal Expenses	Total Other Expenses (dollar amount per item and description)
Traveler				
Accompanying Family Member				

6. All expenses connected to the trip were for actual costs incurred and not a *per diem* or lump sum payment. Signify statement is true by checking box.

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____  Date: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

I am an officer of the above-named organization. Signify statement is true by checking box.

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Committee staff may contact the above-named individual if additional information is required.

If you have questions regarding your completion of this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103.

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

TRAVELER FORM

1. Name of Traveler: Keane Bhatt
2. Sponsor(s) who will be paying or providing in-kind support for the trip: Center for Democracy in the Americas
3. City and State **OR** Foreign Country of Travel: Cuba
4. a. Date of Departure: 2/18/24 Date of Return: 2/22/24
b. Yes No Will you be extending the trip at your personal expense?
If yes, list dates at personal expense: _____
5. a. Yes No Will you be accompanied by a family member at the sponsor's expense? **If yes:**
 - (1) Name of Accompanying Family Member: _____
 - (2) Relationship to Traveler: Spouse Child Other (specify): _____
 - (3) Yes No Accompanying Family Member is at least 18 years of age?
6. a. Yes No Did the trip sponsor answer "Yes" to Question 8(c) on the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* (i.e., travel is sponsored by an entity that employs a registered federal lobbyist or a foreign agent)?
b. **If yes**, and you are requesting lodging for two nights, explain why the second night is warranted:

7. Yes No *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* is attached, including agenda, invitation, invitee list, and any other attachments and Additional Sponsor Forms.
NOTE: The agenda should show the traveler's individual schedule, including departure and arrival times and identify the specific events in which the traveler will be participating.
8. Explain why participation in the trip is connected to the traveler's individual official or representational duties. **Staff should include their job title and how the activities on the itinerary relate to their duties.**
As Policy Director of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, I develop caucus strategy and legislative initiatives related to U.S. foreign policy, including Cuba policy. The purpose of the trip is to identify the ways in which U.S. policies interact with the political, economic, migratory, and humanitarian conditions of Cuba.
9. **Yes No Is the traveler aware of any registered federal lobbyists or foreign agents involved in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip?**
10. For staff travelers, to be completed by your employing Member:

ADVANCED AUTHORIZATION OF EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

I hereby authorize the individual named above, an employee of the U.S. House of Representatives who works under my direct supervision, to accept expenses for the trip described in this request. I have determined that the above-described travel is in connection with my employee's official duties and that acceptance of these expenses will not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Signature of Employing Member:  Date: 1/16/24

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

PRIMARY TRIP SPONSOR FORM

This form should be completed by private entities offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. A completed copy of the form (and any attachments) should be provided to each invited House Member, officer, or employee, who will then forward it to the Committee together with a *Traveler Form* **at least 30 days before the start date of the trip**. The trip sponsor should *NOT* submit the form directly to the Committee. The Committee's website (ethics.house.gov) provides detailed instructions for filling out the form. The Committee will notify the House invitees directly of its decision and will not notify the trip sponsors.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001. Failure to comply with the Committee's Travel Regulations may also lead to the denial of permission to sponsor future trips. Signatures must comply with section 104(bb) of the Travel Regulations.

1. Sponsor who will be paying for the trip:

Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA)

2. I represent that the trip will not be financed, in whole or in part, by a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent. Signify that the statement is true by checking box.

3. **Check only one.** I represent that:

a. The primary trip sponsor has not accepted from any other source, funds intended directly or indirectly to finance any aspect of the trip; **OR**

b. The trip is arranged without regard to congressional participation and the primary trip sponsor has accepted funds only from entities that will receive a tangible benefit in exchange for those funds; **OR**

c. The primary trip sponsor has accepted funds, services, or in-kind assistance from other source(s) intended directly or indirectly to finance all or part of this trip and has enclosed disclosure forms from each of those entities.

If "c" is checked, list the names of the additional sponsors: _____

4. Provide names and titles of **ALL** House Members *and* employees you are inviting. **For each House invitee, provide an explanation of why the individual was invited** (include additional pages if necessary): _____

Please see addendum

5. Yes No Is travel being offered to an accompanying family member of the House invitee(s)?

6. Date of Departure: Sunday, February 18, 2024 Date of Return: Thursday, February 22, 2024

7. a. City of departure: Washington, DC

b. Destination(s): Layover in Miami, Florida; Havana, Cuba

c. City of return: Washington, DC

8. **Check only one.** I represent that

a. The sponsor of the trip is an institution of higher education within the meaning of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965; **OR**

b. The sponsor of the trip does not retain or employ a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent; **OR**

c. The sponsor employs or retains a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent, but the trip is for attendance at a one-day event *and* lobbyist / foreign agent involvement in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip was *de minimis* under the Committee's travel regulations.

9. **Check only one of the following.**

- a. I checked 8(a) or (b) above; **OR**
- b. I checked 8(c) above but am not offering any lodging; **OR**
- c. I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for one night; **OR**
- d. I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for two nights. If you checked this box, explain why the second night of lodging is warranted. _____

10. Attached is a detailed agenda of the activities House invitees will be participating in during the travel (i.e., an hourly description of planned activities for trip invitees). *Indicate agenda is attached by checking box.*

11. **Check only one of the following.**

- a. I represent that a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent will not accompany House Members or employees on any segment of the trip. *Signify the statement is true by clicking the box; OR*
- b. *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is a U.S. institution of higher education.

12. For **each** sponsor required to submit a sponsor form, describe the sponsor's interest in the subject matter of the trip **and** its role in organizing and/or conducting the trip:

CDA is a nonpartisan nonprofit institution that seeks to educate policymakers on U.S. policy toward Cuba. One of CDA's main activities is organizing fact-finding trips to Cuba to give participants first-hand experience. CDA is responsible for all aspects of the trip, including the selection and recruitment of participants and organizing the agenda.

13. **Answer parts a and b. Answer part c if necessary:**

- a. Mode of travel: Air Rail Bus Car Other (specify: _____)
- b. Class of travel: Coach Business First Charter Other (specify: _____)
- c. If travel will be first class, or by chartered or private aircraft, explain why such travel is warranted:

14. I represent that the expenditures related to local area travel during the trip will be unrelated to personal or recreational activities of the invitee(s). *Signify that the statement is true by checking box.*

15. **Check only one.** I represent that either:

- a. The trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *without regard* to congressional participation and that meals provided to congressional participants are similar to those provided to or purchased by other event attendees; **OR**
- b. The trip involves events that are arranged specifically *with regard* to congressional participation. If "b" is checked:

1) Detail the cost *per day* of meals (approximate cost may be provided): Approximately \$80

2) Provide the reason for selecting the location of the event or trip: Havana is Cuba's capital and the country's largest city. It affords the opportunity to meet a wide array of Cubans, including civil society and gov. officials.

16. Name, nightly cost, and reasons for selecting each hotel or other lodging facility:

Hotel Name: Best Western Plus Miami City: Miami Cost Per Night: \$225

Reason(s) for Selecting: Proximity to Miami International Airport

Hotel Name: Hotel Claxon City: Havana Cost Per Night: \$225

Reason(s) for Selecting: Privately owned. Amenities like internet access, central location, proximity to meetings

Hotel Name: Hotel La Distancia City: Havana Cost Per Night: \$225

Reason(s) for Selecting: Privately owned. Amenities like internet access, central location, proximity to meetings

17. I represent that all expenses connected to the trip will be for actual costs incurred and not a per diem or lump sum payment. *Signify that the statement is true by checking the box.*

18. **Total Expenses for each Participant:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amounts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimates	Total Transportation Expenses per Participant	Total Lodging Expenses per Participant	Total Meal Expenses per Participant
For each Member, Officer, or Employee	\$670	\$900	\$360
For each Accompanying Family Member	N/A	N/A	N/A


	Other Expenses (dollar amount per item)	Identify Specific Nature of "Other" Expenses (e.g., taxi, parking, registration fee, etc.)
For each Member, Officer, or Employee	\$650	translation, tips, educational materials
For each Accompanying Family Member	N/A	

19. **Check only one:**

- a. I certify that I am an officer of the organization listed below; **OR**
- b. *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is an individual or a U.S. institution of higher education.

20. **I certify by my signature that**

- a. **I read and understand the Committee's Travel Regulations;**
- b. **I am not a registered federal lobbyist or registered foreign agent; and**
- c. **The information on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Signature:  Date: 01/10/2024
 Name: Maria Jose Espinosa Title: Executive Director
 Organization: Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA)
 Address: PO Box 53106, Washington DC 20009
 Email: maria@democracyinamericas.org Telephone: 202-914-9357

If there are questions regarding this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103 or travel.requests@mail.house.gov.

Michael Guest, Mississippi
Chairman
Susan Wild, Pennsylvania
Ranking Member

David P. Joyce, Ohio
John H. Rutherford, Florida
Andrew R. Garbarino, New York
Michelle Fischbach, Minnesota

Veronica Escobar, Texas
Mark DeSaulnier, California
Deborah K. Ross, North Carolina
Glenn F. Ivey, Maryland



ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

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February 15, 2024

Mr. Keane Bhatt
Congressional Progressive Caucus
2346 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Bhatt:

Pursuant to House Rule 25, clause 5(d)(2), the Committee on Ethics hereby approves your proposed trip to Miami, Florida, and Cuba,¹ scheduled for February 18 to 22, 2024, sponsored by Center for Democracy in the Americas.

You must complete an Employee Post-Travel Disclosure Form (which your employing Member must also sign) and file it, together with a Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form completed by the trip sponsor, with the Clerk of the House within 15 days after your return from travel. As part of that filing, you are also required to attach a copy of this letter and both the Traveler and Primary Trip Sponsor Forms (including attachments) you previously submitted to the Committee in seeking pre-approval for this trip. If you are required to file an annual Financial Disclosure Statement, you must also report all travel expenses totaling more than \$480 from a single source on the "Travel" schedule of your annual Financial Disclosure Statement covering this calendar year. Finally, Travel Regulation § 404(d) also requires you to keep a copy of all request forms and supporting information provided to the Committee for three subsequent Congresses from the date of travel.

Because the trip may involve meetings with foreign government representatives, we note that House employees may accept, under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA), gifts "of minimal value [currently \$480] tendered as a souvenir or mark of courtesy" by a foreign government. Any tangible gifts valued in excess of minimal value received from a foreign government must, within 60 days of acceptance, be disclosed on a Form for Disclosing Gifts from Foreign Governments and either turned over to the Clerk of the House, or, with the written approval of the Committee, retained for official use.

¹ Please be aware that the Committee's review of the proposed trip does not extend to either the security situation in the destination country or security related to foreign travel in general. We recommend you contact the Office of House Security (OHS) for a safety and security briefing prior to your departure. OHS may be reached at (202) 226-2044 or ohsstaff@mail.house.gov. House travelers should also register for the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at <https://step.state.gov>.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at extension 5-7103.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Guest". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michael Guest
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Wild". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

Susan Wild
Ranking Member

MG/SW:kjf

Addendum: House Invitees

Representative Pramila Jayapal was invited due to her interest in foreign policy and Cuba policy matters; and her leadership as the Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Rep. Ilhan Omar was invited due to her interest in foreign policy and Cuba policy matters; her membership on the Congressional Progressive Caucus; and her representation of a district with an important agricultural community with potential economic ties to Cuba.

Rep. Nydia Velázquez was invited due to her interest in foreign policy and Cuba policy matters; her membership on the House Financial Services Committee, via which Cuba policy is made; and her membership on the Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Michael Darner, the Executive Director of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, has been invited due to his involvement in the Caucus, which includes drafting foreign policy work and developing the Caucus's agenda. Mr. Darner will accompany Chair Jayapal and the rest of the delegation on the trip, providing staff support.

Keane Bhatt, the Policy Director of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, has been invited due to his involvement in the Caucus, which includes drafting foreign policy work and developing the Caucus's agenda. Mr. Bhatt will accompany Chair Jayapal and the rest of the delegation on the trip, providing staff support.

Gregory Adams, Legislative Director for Rep. Barbara Lee, was invited due to Mrs. Lee's interest and leadership on Cuba issues. Rep. Lee has been an outspoken proponent of engagement and dialogue with Cuba. She is also a ranking member of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the State Department, including Western Hemisphere policy.

CDA Delegation
AGENDA
CONFIDENTIAL
Miami - Havana, Cuba
February 19-22, 2024

***Due to bad weather, the scheduled DCA-MIA flight was canceled, and the group missed the scheduled time in Miami on Sunday, February 18, and the initial flight to HAV. The group left DCA and landed in Havana on Monday, February 19.**

DAY 1 - Monday, February 19, 2024

5:00 am Flight AA 555 Departs from Reagan National Airport (DCA)

8:00 am Flight AA 555 Arrived at Miami International Airport (MIA)

10:30 am **Flight AA 2705** Departed from Miami International Airport (MIA)

12:00 pm **Flight AA 2705** Arrived in José Martí international airport (HAV)

Arrivals, collected luggage, transferred to Hotel Claxon to check-in.

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Meeting with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX): The delegation met with Cuba's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Carlos Fernández de Cossío Domínguez**, to discuss U.S.-Cuba bilateral relations; Cuba's foreign affairs of interest to U.S. policymakers; and the state of bilateral cooperation with the U.S. on issues of mutual interest. Fernández de Cossío Domínguez started his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1984, served as the Cuban Ambassador to Canada (1999-2004), and later as the Ambassador to South Africa (2013-2017), with roles at the Cuban Communist Party and various divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in between. In 2022, he became Deputy Minister. Fernández de Cossío Domínguez was the Representative of Cuba during the first phase of the peace process between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

Other participants:

Johana Tablada, deputy director general for the United States of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Rodney González, Director of Legal Affairs and Analysis of the General Directorate of the United States of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Manlio Hernández Carbonel, Director of the Department of Political and Economic Affairs of the General Directorate of the United States of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Lucía Pérez Cuervo, official of the Department of Political and Economic Affairs of the General Directorate of the United States of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Gabriela Castillo Rodríguez, official of the Department of Legal Affairs and Analysis of the General Directorate of the United States of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Location: MINREX, Calle G No. 360, Vedado

5:00 pm

Executive time at hotel

Location: Hotel Claxon, 458 Paseo, Vedado

6:00 pm - 6:20 pm

Walk to dinner meeting

6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Dinner Discussion with U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, Benjamin Ziff, his wife Anat Ziff, Joseph Bristol, Political/Economic Counselor and John Wheeler, Deputy Political/Economic Counselor: Diplomatic relations were officially reestablished between the US and Cuba on July 20, 2015, allowing the U.S. Embassy in Havana to re-open its doors for the first time in over 50 years. Since 2017, the embassy has operated with a reduced staff since most personnel were recalled by the Trump administration due to reports of unexplained health incidents. In January 2023, with increased staffing the U.S. Embassy in Havana resumed full immigrant visa processing and consular services after five years. **Benjamin Ziff**, a career diplomat who previously coordinated the U.S. State Department's migration policy and strategy for the Western Hemisphere, assumed the position as chief of mission in July 2022. We also discussed the Cuban private sector with the restaurateur and chef, **Raulito Bazuk**.

Dinner at Grados

Location: Calle E No 562, Vedado

9:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Return to hotel

DAY 3 -Tuesday, February 20, 2024

7:50 am

Leave Hotel

8:30 am-10:30 am

Breakfast with Latin American ambassadors
Colombian ambassador: José Noé Ríos Muñoz
Brazilian ambassador: Christian Vargas
Chilean ambassador: Patricia Esquenazi Marín

Spanish ambassador: D. Ángel Martín Peccis

The ambassadors provided a third country view of the many transitions in Cuba and a sense of bilateral relations between Cuba and his/her government. The delegation explored the ambassadors' views on the impacts on the island of a changing U.S. policy toward Cuba, including Cuba's inclusion on the List of States Sponsors of Terrorism (SSOT).

Location: 21A # 13408 between 134 and 140, Cubanacan

11:00 am-12:00 pm

Meeting with Mr. Rubén Remigio Ferro, President of the People's Supreme Court. The group discussed the events of July 11, 2021 and the current state of those imprisoned after the protests.

Location: Tribunal Supremo, 367 e/ Obrapia y Obispo, Habana Vieja

12:15 pm-1:00 pm

Meeting with Mr. Antonio Luis Carricate Corona, President of Cuba's Chamber of Commerce and Johanna Odriozola Guitart, Vice Minister of the Economy to engage in a comprehensive dialogue about the current economic landscape in Cuba, with a particular focus on the development and challenges facing the private sector, small and medium size enterprises, and the impact of U.S. policies. Also participating on the Cuban side: **Mr. Homero Saker Rivero**, advisor to the President of the Chamber of Commerce and **representatives of the private sector**.

Location: Chamber of Commerce, Calle 21 no. 661 esq. a A, Vedado

1:15 pm - 2:20 pm

Lunch in Vedado

Location: Atelier, Calle 5 # 511 between Paseo and 2 Vedado

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Visit to **Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM)** an international medical school in Cuba, and a prominent part of the Cuban healthcare system. Established in 1999 and operated by the Cuban government, ELAM has been described as being the largest medical school in the world. All those enrolled are international students from outside Cuba and mainly come from Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. The group will gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes of the Cuban health care and medical education system, as well as the impact of U.S. policies in Cuba's healthcare system. Participants: **Director of the Ministry of Public Health, executives from Biocubafarma, and U.S. students from ELAM**. Meet with five American ELAM students from across the country, including Georgia, New York, and Michigan.

Location: Carretera Panamericana Km 3 1/2, Carr. Panamericana, La Habana

4:00 pm - 5:20 pm

Transfer to hotel and executive/rest time.

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Meeting with the President of Cuba, Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez, accompanied by Johana Tablada, Carlos Fernández de Cossío, Manlio Hernández and Foreign Minister, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla. The group discussed U.S.-Cuba bilateral relations; Cuba's foreign affairs of interest to U.S. policymakers including the situation of those imprisoned after the July 11, 2021 event; and the state of bilateral cooperation with the U.S. on issues of mutual interest.

Location: Presidential Palace

8:15 pm- 8:45 pm

Private Tour of **La Fábrica de Arte Cubano (F.A.C.)**, the preeminent arts and culture space in Cuba, which hosts music performances, art gallery, multiple bars, and a restaurant. We were received by Cuban musician and founder of FAC, X Alfonso.

8:45 pm - 10:30 pm

Dinner at El Cocinero with guests, including *X Alfonso* a bass player, arranger, singer, musical producer, and the founder of [Fábrica de Arte Cubano](#) (F.A.C.). He graduated from the National Arts School (ENA) in 1990 and played music with his parents' band, Síntesis. He and his father composed the score for the film *Maria Antonia*, which in 2000 won the Coral Award for the Best Soundtrack at the New Latin American Film Festival. X recorded his first solo album entitled *Mundo Real* in November 1999. In 2011, under the FAC label, X released the album *Reverse*, which was offered free of charge to anyone with a flash memory. We were also joined by **Adriana Heredia Sánchez** is a Cuban economist, professor at the University of Havana, and the founder of Beyond Roots, a Havana-based venture focused on promoting Afro-Cuban culture. **Carlos Gomez** is a Cuban producer and filmmaker who founded the independent audiovisual production company WajirosFilms based in Havana. **Lauren Farjardo Cardenas** is a Cuban fashion designer and clothing maker who co-founded DADOR, an independent female-founded Cuban slow fashion brand, ethically handcrafted in Havana. **Diana Figueroa**, is the co-owner of Jibaro's restaurant in Old Havana. She holds a PhD in Physics and MSc in Gastronomy and Culinary Management. Diana has worked as head-chef and manager at Jibaro and worked as a manager and coordinator of several catering and restoration activities. Additionally, she has worked as a professor and coordinator of students in university. **Oscar Fernandez Estrada** is the founder of Deshidratados Habana (Dehydrated Havana). The 21-employee company produces dehydrated foods and healthy snacks for the country's stores and restaurant industry, with the goal of export sales in the United States. He has a doctorate in economics from the University of Havana, 2008 and has co-author several books on Cuban economics.

Location: Calle 26, Vedado

10:30 pm Return to hotel

DAY 4 - Wednesday, February 21, 2024

8:00 am **Breakfast at leisure at Hotel Claxon**

9:00 am-10:30 am **Visited the home of La Reyna y La Real**, a female hip hop/jazz duo. The group's music focuses on breaking down stereotypes in Cuban society, including machismo, healthy relationships, gender relations and race. After a brief performance by the duo, the group had an intimate discussion in their living room about their interesting and difficult musical journey, and gained insight into the challenges and opportunities young black Cubans face.

Location: Calle Perez between Melones and Guanabacoa, Luyano

10:30 am - 11:00 am Transfer to school

11:00 am-12:00 pm **Visited the "Conservatorio Guillermo Tomas"**, a music school located in the Afrocuban municipality of Guanabacoa, in the outskirts of the city. The group will enjoy classroom visits and discussions with students and professors at this school serving over 500 students at both elementary and intermediate levels. The delegation spoke with students and teachers in a people-to-people engagement and learned about the music education system in the country and gained a deeper understanding of the education system and connections with young Cuban musicians.

Location: San Juan Bosco No. 57, Guanabacoa

12:00 pm - 12:30 pm Transfer to farm

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm **Lunch at Vista Hermosa**, a farming cooperative that supplies products to Cuba's expanding private sector. The group engaged in a discussion about deregulation and privatization within the agricultural sector, alongside the impacts of climate change. Additionally, there was a focus on the effects of U.S. policies, as well as the opportunities and challenges associated with collaboration with the U.S. agricultural sector. The delegation will learn about the challenges and opportunities presented by Cuban agriculture in 2024. They will gain an understanding of what types of agricultural trade would benefit their home states, (as agricultural exemptions in the embargo exist).

Guest: Margarita Fernandez is the Executive Director of the Vermont Caribbean Institute (VCI), where she leads efforts in sustainable food systems and biodiversity conservation in Cuba through collaborative projects and professional exchanges since joining in January 2015. With nearly 20 years of experience, she has focused on agroecology, food systems, and international cooperation

projects across the Global South, including countries like Cuba, Laos, and Mexico. Margarita's extensive experience includes long-term contracts and consultancies with various organizations, contributing significantly to sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation efforts, particularly in Cuba since 1998.

Location: Camino La Esperanza S/N. Bacuranao, Havana

3:30 - 5:00 pm

Tour of the Capitol building in advance of a Meeting with Deputies of the National Assembly of People's Power. Participants include: **Rolando González Patricio**, Chairman of the Commission of International Relations of the National Assembly of People's Power and president of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament. **Martha del Carmen Mesa Valenciano**, president of the Commission of Education, Culture, Science, Technology and Environment. **Arelys Santana Bello**, President of the Commission on Attention to Youth, Children and Equal Rights for Women. **José Luis Toledo Santander**, President of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs.

Location: Capitol Building, Old Havana

5:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Transfer to Hotel and Executive Time

6:00 pm-7:30 pm

Off-the-record dinner meeting with Cuban journalist to discuss political, economic, and social developments on the island. **Liz Oliva Fernández** is an award-winning Cuban journalist, presenter and producer with Belly of the Beast. She has won a Gracie Award and was co-winner of a One World Media Award and a Telly Award. Apart from her journalism and filmmaking, Liz is a dedicated anti-racist and feminist activist.

Location: La Guarida, 418 Concordia, Havana

8:00 pm-10:00 pm

Creative Happy Hour with diverse designers, artists and entrepreneurs. The group visited a Havana art gallery for a fashion show, dance performance and intimate conversations with young LGBTQI+ and AfroCuban creatives. This was an opportunity for the delegation to interact one on one, or in smaller groups with young Cubans who are building small businesses and creating artistic practices despite the difficulties present in the political economy. The delegation was able to ask questions about the lives in Cuba, impact of U.S. policy on their lives, see artistic works, and engage on a deeper level with artists and entrepreneurs.

Location: La Lavandería; Calle 54 between 29 and 27

10:00 pm

Return to hotel

DAY 5 - Thursday, February 22, 2024

8:00 am **Breakfast at leisure**

9:00 am - 10:30 am **Meeting with families of political prisoners.** The Congresswomen and staff met with two family members of July 11 prisoners to discuss the experience of those incarcerated.

Location: Hotel Claxon

10:45 am **Check out of Hotel Claxon**

11:00 am - 12:30 pm **Visit Dador and Cladestina, discuss Cuban entrepreneurship.**
Dador is a modern, high-quality clothing line, founded by women and made in Cuba. *Clandestina* is an independent woman-owned and –run design studio and shop. The intended takeaway is for the delegation to learn about the challenges and successes of private business owners in Cuba – which is a small slice of the mostly state-run economy.

Location: Dador: 258 Amargura, Old Havana

Meeting with Lauren Fajardo, co-owner of Dador

Clandestina: 403 Villegas, Old Havana

Meeting with Idania del Rio, co-owner of Clandestina

12:30 pm -1:30pm **Lunch at private restaurant El Cafe.** El Cafe provides fresh, vegetarian-friendly fare in the middle of Old Havana.

Location: 358 Amargura, La Habana Vieja

1:45 pm **Bus driver collected bags from hotel, picked group up in Old Havana**

2:15 pm - 3:00 pm **Visited the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center (CMMLK).** Founded in 1987 the center is a community and cultural center dedicated to promoting the ideals and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It focuses on social justice, equality, and nonviolent activism, reflecting King's legacy. Located in Havana, the CMMLK serves as a hub for educational programs, community development projects, and the promotion of ecumenical and social thought inspired by King's life and work. It organizes workshops, seminars, and conferences on various social issues, including racial equality, gender rights, environmental sustainability, and peace. The group learned about grassroots movements and community initiatives aimed at improving the lives of marginalized populations in Cuba, which the Center is actively involved in. The group heard about the impact of U.S. policies in their work.

Location: Ave. 53 No. 9609 between 96 and 98, Marianao

3:00 pm **Departed MLK Center for José Martí International Airport**

5:13 pm **Flight AA 2296** Departed from José Martí International Airport (HAV)

6:30 pm **Flight AA 2296** Arrived in Miami International Airport (MIA)
Layover in Miami

8:11 pm **Flight AA 2897** Departed from Miami International Airport (MIA)

10:49 pm **Flight AA 2897** Arrived in Washington-Reagan National Airport (DCA)

*Rep. Omar and Mr. Mynett flew to Minneapolis on AA 458 9:02 PM-11:58pm.

*Mr. Greg Adams flew to Boston on AA 1054.

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