

PRESS RELEASE

The Cuba Consortium Advisory Board Adds New Members, Will Hold First Meeting

October 8, 2015

(Washington, D.C. / October 8, 2015) *The Cuba Consortium*, a member-based group of organizations and individuals monitoring U.S.-Cuba normalization, has expanded its Advisory Board, adding former U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe, former U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and former chair of Johnson & Johnson William C. Weldon.

Also joining the Advisory Board, which is co-chaired by former U.S. Senators Nancy Kassebaum and Tom Daschle, are Dr. Michael F. Adams, president emeritus of the University of Georgia; Richard C. Blum, chairman and president of Blum Capital; Maurice Greenberg, chairman and CEO of C.V. Starr & Co. Inc.; Linda Klein, president-elect of the American Bar Association; Fred Malek, founder and chairman of Thayer Lodging Group; and Rob Wilder, co-founder of ThinkFoodGroup. Previously announced members of the Advisory Board include Sheila Burke, Senator Byron Dorgan, Rodney Ferguson, Senator Bill Frist, Dr. Helene Gayle, Senator Bob Kerrey, and Thomas Ross.

According to Co-chair Senator Nancy Kassebaum, "The Advisory Board composition is reflective of the varying points of view as to how, when, and under what conditions we should normalize relations with Cuba. It also represents a wide array of business interests that are looking to enter Cuba. The result should be a very balanced, thoughtful, and realistic understanding of how normalization will unfold."

The Advisory Board of *The Cuba Consortium* will hold its inaugural meeting on October 8 in Washington, D.C. In addition to updates on the Consortium and reports on recent or planned trips to Cuba, the meeting will include a conversation with Dr. William LeoGrande, author of *Foreign Affairs'* Best Book of the Year, *Back Channel to Cuba: The Hidden History of Negotiations Between Washington and Havana*, and a specialist in Latin American politics and U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba at American University.

Co-chair Senator Tom Daschle said that "There is much to be done in both countries to facilitate trade and investment, and we hope to shed light on what that shared reform agenda should be and how we might achieve it. We begin that work with a Washington Conference in February."

Following this first annual Washington Conference in early 2016, the Consortium will host a series of regional roundtables focused on key sectors such as tourism and hospitality, agriculture, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, IT and telecommunications, and infrastructure. These expert industry workshops will engage, inform, and assist Americans interested in investing and doing business in Cuba.

The Cuba Consortium, a project of The Howard Baker Forum, will not lobby Congress on any legislation but instead will help to develop relationships between U.S. businesses and Cuba. The Consortium consists of companies, non-profit organizations, investors, academics, and entrepreneurs organized to track and examine the normalization process between the U.S. and Cuba, and to inform and prepare members for opportunities to engage Cuba. The Consortium will also include foreign policy, political, economic, international development, legal, and cultural experts who have specialized knowledge regarding the normalization process.

The [Howard Baker Forum](#), a public and international affairs affiliate of Baker Donelson, was founded by the late Senator Howard Baker to examine critical issues affecting the nation's domestic progress and relations abroad. The Forum organizes a variety of programs and research projects to highlight and analyze public policy challenges facing the nation today.