



THE ALBERT SHANKER INSTITUTE

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Raul Castro
President
Cuba

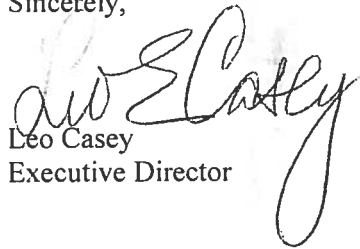
Dear President Castro:

I am writing on behalf of the Albert Shanker Institute, an independent think tank associated with the American Federation of Teachers, to express our outrage at the recent arrest of Manuel Cuesta Morua and to protest his subsequent oppressive conditions of release.

The Cuban government's actions clearly violate internationally recognized standards and norms on freedom of association and expression. They raise questions, and tend to ratify, Mr. Morua's concerns about racial discrimination in Cuba. As Americans, we have learned through our own experience that historic, systemic discrimination based on race can only be addressed through open and free dialogue. Other countries with diverse population and a history of discrimination have taken the same approach. It is a painful but healing process that must both redress past injustice and build a firm basis for future progress.

Accordingly, we urge the Cuban government to end its repressive policy, to open a dialogue with Mr. Morua and his group, and to engage with the broader Afro-Cuban community with the sensitivity and responsiveness that such issues demand. Free and open discussion is a bed rock right for all peoples, and must be pursued and encouraged by governments aspiring to build stable and democratic society.

Sincerely,



Leo Casey
Executive Director

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