

What does the ‘lifting of restrictions’ mean?

President Barack Obama has directed the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and Commerce to take the needed steps to permit greater flexibility in family travel to and from Cuba, facilitate the transfer of remittances, improve communication between the countries and create avenues to funnel donations to Cuba. The White House further defined the changes in the bullet points that follow:

Family visits to Cuba

We will lift all restrictions on family visits to Cuba by authorizing such transactions by a general license, which will strengthen contacts and promote American good will. We will ensure the positive reach of this effort by:

- Defining family members who may be visited to be persons within three degrees of family relationship (e.g., second cousins) and to allow individuals who share a common dwelling as a family with an authorized traveler to accompany them;
- Removing limitations on the frequency of visits;
- Removing limitations on the duration of a visit;
- Authorizing expenditure amounts that are the same as non-family travel; and
- Removing the 44-pound limitation on accompanied baggage.

Remove restrictions on remittances

We will remove restrictions on remittances to a person’s family member in Cuba to increase Cubans’ access to resources to help create opportunities for them by:

- Authorizing remittances to individuals within three degrees of family relationship (e.g., second cousins) provided that no remittances shall be authorized to currently prohibited members of the Government of Cuba or currently prohibited members of the Cuban Communist Party;
- Removing limits on frequency of remittances;
- Removing limits on the amount of remittances;
- Authorizing travelers to carry up to \$3,000 in remittances; and
- Establishing general license for banks and other depository institutions to forward remittances.

Authorize greater telecommunications links with Cuba

We will authorize greater telecommunications links with Cuba to advance people-to-people interaction at no cost to the U.S. government. This will increase the means through which Cubans on the island can communicate with each other and with persons outside of Cuba.

- Authorize U.S. telecommunications network providers to enter into agreements to establish fiber-optic cable and satellite telecommunications facilities linking the United States and Cuba.
- License U.S. telecommunications service providers to enter into and operate under roaming service agreements with Cuba's telecommunications service providers.
- License U.S. satellite radio and satellite television service providers to engage in transactions necessary to provide services to customers in Cuba.
- License persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction to activate and pay U.S. and third-country service providers for telecommunications, satellite radio and satellite television services provided to individuals in Cuba, except certain senior Communist Party and Cuban government officials.
- Authorize, consistent with national security concerns, the export or re-export to Cuba of donated personal communications devices such as mobile phone systems, computers and software, and satellite receivers through a license exception.

Revise gift parcel regulations

We will expand the scope of humanitarian donations eligible for export through license exceptions by:

- Restoring clothing, personal hygiene items, seeds, veterinary medicines and supplies, fishing equipment and supplies, and soap-making equipment to the list of items eligible to be included in gift parcel donations;
- Restoring items normally exchanged as gifts by individuals in “usual and reasonable” quantities to the list of items eligible to be included in gift parcel donations;
- Expanding the scope of eligible gift parcel donors to include any individual;

- Expanding the scope of eligible gift parcel donees to include individuals other than Cuban Communist Party officials or Cuban government officials already prohibited from receiving gift parcels, or charitable, educational or religious organizations not administered or controlled by the Cuban government; and
- Increasing the value limit on non-food items to \$800.