

Miguel "Mike" B. Fernandez

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An Open Letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio &
U.S. Representatives Mario Diaz-Balart, Carlos Giménez, and Maria Elvira Salazar

For decades, I have stood with you in defense of the freedoms we cherish, those we were denied in the country of our birth and found in the grace of this one. I know what it means to flee tyranny. Like you, I carry that history in my bones and that pain in my heart. But like a growing number in our community, I have watched with dismay as the very values we once found sanctuary in are now being attacked by a previously unthinkable threat — The sitting President of the United States.

In the face of all of this, the silence from our own leaders — the sons and daughters of exiles — has become deafening.

That silence is not neutrality, nor ignorance, it is complicity and cowardice.

Today, The Trump Administration has adopted a posture of cruelty towards immigrants that is beneath the values this country has always promised. Revoking protected status for Venezuelan and Cuban immigrants, many of whom fled oppression just as our families once did, is not just policy — it is hypocrisy. When funding for USAID, that directly supports efforts to foster political and social change in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and throughout the region is eliminated overnight — it is a betrayal. When community institutions like Radio and TV Marti are destroyed, cutting off the Cuban people from information they often cannot get any other way — it is personal. Most alarming is the Trump Administration's disregard for our allies around the world, and embrace of dictators, like those in the countries we escaped from — this is unacceptable.

Your silence has caused fear and real harm to many in our community, in your districts.

Yes, the Cuban, Venezuelan and Nicaraguan dictatorships remain a focal point and must continue to be condemned. But we must not become so fixated on the wounds of our past that we fail to see those being inflicted in the present. Our leaders must focus on addressing the needs of our neighbors across Miami-Dade County: immigrants, workers, families struggling with housing, healthcare, and opportunity. We need a new strategy, grounded in courage, and focused on the people of South Florida — the people that elected you to represent them.

What representative leadership demands today:

- Defend the vulnerable. Immigration policy must reflect the same compassion for those today that we once benefited from, not that long ago.
- Focus on home. Champion policies that bring real relief to South Florida families, on affordable housing, healthcare, access to education, and job opportunities.

- Stand for human rights. Condemn authoritarianism wherever it rises, whether in Havana, Caracas, Managua, Moscow or in Washington, D.C.
- Listen to the next generation. Engage with immigrant communities to understand their priorities and bring them into the political conversation.
- Lead with courage. In the end we are not measured by loyalty to a party or president, but by loyalty to The Constitution and to principle, even when it costs something.

If you can't find your voice at this moment, or tell the difference between one dictator and another, then perhaps it is time to make room for others who can and have a vision that you may lack.

I write not in anger, but with urgency, alarm, and purpose.

Since you have not yet raised your voices as our representatives to defend those who have none, I intend to use my efforts and ask other voices to join in elevating this crisis in our community that cannot be ignored. These are the voices of mothers and grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers, students, workers, and Dreamers all calling out for dignity, for safety, and for leadership that remembers its roots.

You were elected because of our votes; remember, public trust isn't guaranteed — it's earned and maintained.

Your constituents and this community need you to speak up.

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