

MARIO DIAZ-BALART  
25TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

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June 22, 2018

The Honorable Michele T. Bond  
Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Consular Affairs  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Director L. Francis Cissna  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20529

Dear Assistant Secretary Bond and Director Cissna,

I write to request clarification on the process for Cuban Family Reunification Parole (CFRP) program following the departure of most personnel from the U.S. embassy in Havana in September 2017. Additionally, if the process is undecided, I further request, within all applicable rules and regulations, that you take all expeditious measures to resolve this pending issue.

Currently, the caseworkers in my district office, and my constituents with family members applying under the CFRP program, inform me that they receive the following message:

*The case status remains the same, as we are currently waiting for an interview to be scheduled. As you were made aware, on September 29, 2017 the Department of State issued the departure of non-emergent personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba. The Department of State is currently working with our colleagues at the Department of Homeland Security to determine a separate processing location for CFRP cases. There is no timeframe as to when a new location will be selected. Your constituent may keep an eye on the U.S. Embassy's website, <https://cu.usembassy.gov>.*

When searching the website, the U.S. Embassy continues to post the following message:

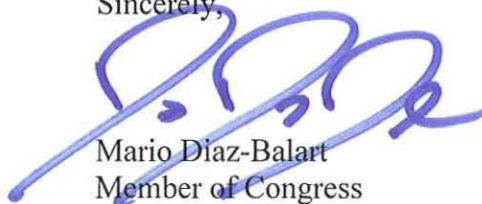
*The State Department and the Department of Homeland Security are determining arrangements for processing applications under the Cuban Family Reunification Program (CFRP). We will communicate any future plans as they are decided.*

This delayed lack of guidance has led to confusion and a backlog of pending cases.

I have expressed concern about the relative ease by which regime operatives in Cuba seem to obtain U.S. entry compared to other more deserving Cubans. In contrast, pro-democracy activists, those with nonemergency humanitarian needs, and possibly family members seeking reunification with their loved ones in the United States face exceedingly difficult hurdles. While I appreciate the U.S. State Department's diplomatic obligations as well as its need to protect the safety of its personnel stationed abroad, I remain concerned for eligible Cuban nationals who cannot meet the more onerous burdens that they now face.

Accordingly, I request clarification on the CFRP program process and, if that process is yet undetermined, I respectfully urge an expeditious and fair resolution of this difficult issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mario Diaz-Balart', is written over the typed name and title.

Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

July 30, 2018

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Diaz-Balart:

Thank you for your June 22, 2018 letter requesting clarification on the process for Cuban Family Reunification Parole (CFRP) program<sup>1</sup> cases following the departure of non-emergent personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba on September 29, 2017.

As of June 29, 2018, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has accepted a total of 20,838 Form I-131 CFRP applications, of which 20,348 have been conditionally approved and are pending interview abroad. Also, approximately 1700 grandfathered<sup>2</sup> CFRP applicants are pending interview. Unfortunately, in light of the significant drawdown in U.S. government personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Cuba for security reasons, all CFRP processing in Havana is currently suspended. That said, the Department of Homeland Security is working with our colleagues in the Department of State to evaluate options for processing pending CFRP applications in alternative locations, contingent to the final review of the program.<sup>3</sup> We will keep the public apprised of future developments.

Thank you for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "LFC".

L. Francis Cissna  
Director

<sup>1</sup> Under the Cuban Family Reunification Parole program, individuals who have approved family-based immigrant petitions on behalf of family members in Cuba may, upon invitation, request parole on behalf of their Cuban beneficiary relatives, for whom an immigrant visa is not yet available. Individuals requesting parole under the program after February 2015 have to file a Form I-131, Application for Travel Document, and pay the associated fee or request for fee waiver. The CFRP process requires beneficiaries to undergo security checks and be interviewed abroad to confirm program eligibility, before a travel document is issued.

<sup>2</sup> Form I-130 petitioners, who received an eligibility notice from the NVC before December 18, 2014, and who submitted to the NVC all necessary documents to apply for the CFRP Program before February 17, 2015 ("grandfathered" cases), were not required to submit a USCIS form or fee to have their relatives in Cuba considered for parole under this program. See [uscis.gov](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Humanitarian/Parole/CFRP_Fact_Sheet_8.26.2016.pdf) at [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Humanitarian/Parole/CFRP\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_8.26.2016.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Humanitarian/Parole/CFRP_Fact_Sheet_8.26.2016.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The Executive Order on Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements signed by President Trump on January 25, 2017 prompted a review of all categorical parole programs administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The CFRP program is currently under review by USCIS and the Department of Homeland Security.