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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

November 13, 2019

His Majesty the King
Palacio de la Zarzuela
Carretera del Pardo
28071 Madrid, Spain

Your Majesty,

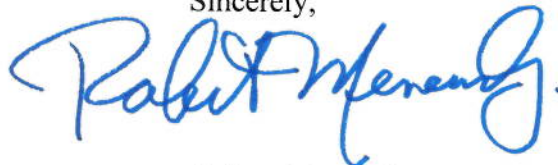
I write on the occasion of your visit to the Republic of Cuba to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the founding of the City of Havana. While this momentous event is a testament to the enduring resilience of the Cuban people, this anniversary—and your visit—come at a time when Cuba's citizens continue to struggle under an authoritarian government that denies them their most basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I understand that your official agenda in Cuba will include a visit to the City of Santiago de Cuba and the memorial at San Juan Hill to honor the legacy of the soldiers who lost their lives during the Spanish-American War—a truly tragic chapter in the history of friendship between our two countries. During your visit, I hope that you will also consider commemorating the dozens of Spanish citizens that lost their lives at the hands of the Cuban dictatorship in January 1959 or in the ensuing decades.

Additionally, your visit to Cuba occurs at a moment when the Cuban regime has arbitrarily jailed and tortured leading democracy activist, Mr. Jose Daniel Ferrer, the head of the Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU). The cruel abuses committed against Mr. Ferrer only underscore the Cuban government's intolerance towards freedom of expression and political pluralism. I urge you to request a meeting with Mr. Ferrer, as it would send a clear signal of Spain's support to courageous democracy and human rights activists across Cuba and around the world.

As you stated during travel to the United States in 2014, "Spain and the United States share the same values of democracy, liberty and fundamental freedoms." It is my most sincere hope that you will take advantage of your presence in Cuba to advance our shared values and publicly call for Mr. Ferrer's release, as well as accountability for the systematic abuse of human rights that have occurred in Cuba during the last six decades.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
Ranking Member