



US-CUBA LABOR SOLIDARITY

Organize & Mobilize

December 21, 2023

My name is Michael Vera, and I am a 25-year member of the Inlandboatman’s Union of the Pacific, Southern California Region, the marine division of the ILWU. My union represents inshore mariners along the west coast of the U.S.

In May 2023, I joined a labor delegation to Cuba to see firsthand their reality and the devastating impact U.S. policy has had on Cuban society. Upon arriving in Cuba, I witnessed a country in struggle; a people who proudly defend social achievements like free healthcare and access to higher education and a culture based on human solidarity. But also, a people who face shortages of necessities, food, and fuel, because of the US 60+ year blockade, making daily life stressful and contributing to large numbers of Cubans leaving the island.

Joining the labor delegation was a valuable experience. It provided an open exchange with union fighters from Cuba and around the world, opportunities to learn about popular democracy and to stand in solidarity with union members who are fighting to defend their country against interference from the U.S. government.

I strongly encourage other workers and union members to consider joining a labor delegation to Cuba. The US-Cuba Labor Solidarity network is sharing information about labor delegations to Cuba for 2024.

There are 2 delegations, with a few travel options. One delegation is organized by Building Relations with Cuban Labor (BRWCL), hosted by Cuba’s Institute of Friendship with the People. Dates of travel are April 27- May 4th. The preliminary itinerary and pricing are available at BRWCL website. <http://www.buildingrelationswithcubanlabor.org/>

The 2nd delegation is organized by the LA Hands-Off Cuba Committee, hosted by the CTC (Cuban trade union Federation). Dates of travel for their full Pasantia (union internship with delegations from the global south) are April 22- May 2nd. There is a possibility of doing a 5-day itinerary, April 28-May 2 (including factory visits and the end of the Pasantia option, for those who don’t have extended time off from work. (LA.US.HandsoffCuba@gmail.com)

Both itineraries include participation in the May Day Parade in Havana and the International Solidarity Conference May 2. Joining one of the labor delegations is a great way of learning first-hand of Cuba’s internationally recognized accomplishments and the national challenges related to 60+ years of US economic and political sanctions.

If you are interested in learning more about these delegations, please contact Building Relations With Cuban Labor at the website above or Mark at the LAHOC committee email above.

In solidarity,
Mike Vera
Business Agent, Inlandboatman’s Union of the Pacific

Also, US-Cuba Labor Solidarity network advocates for Cuba to be removed from the “state sponsor of terrorism” list and we are reaching out to labor to support this initiative. So far, 40 union bodies have passed resolutions. For more information about this campaign contact Bill Camp, BRWCL, at billcamp9999@gmail.com

For more information visit us at
www.us-cubanormalization.org/uscubalabor
Sign Up for UCLS with QR Code
uscubalaborsolidarity@gmail.com

