

[Promoting Medical and Scientific Collaboration Between Sacramento and Cuba]

Resolution to support medical and scientific collaboration between the Counties of the Sacramento Central Labor Council, the State of California and Cuba to address the COVID-19 pandemic and urging the United States Congress to remove restrictions on collaboration by suspending economic and travel sanctions against Cuba.

WHEREAS, The United States has the highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths in the world—~~5.65~~ 5.2-million infected, with deaths exceeding ~~175,000~~ 167,000; and

WHEREAS, California now has the highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths in the US—~~640,000~~ 575,000 infected, with deaths exceeding ~~11,500~~ 10,400; and

WHEREAS, U.S. deaths fall disproportionately on Black and Latinx communities, retirees and workers, especially those deemed essential, and their families; and

WHEREAS, In the face of this worldwide menace, now is the time for international cooperation and solidarity; and

WHEREAS, the Sacramento Central Labor Council's jurisdiction is home to many prestigious medical institutions, organizations, and businesses, and is in a position to provide leadership to the rest of the country in medical research, treatment, and cooperation; and

WHEREAS, The country of Cuba has a long history of providing international medical aid to other countries with many of its medical personnel directly involved in the fight against COVID-19 as members of the specially trained Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade against Disasters and Serious Epidemics; and

WHEREAS, The Medical Brigade distinguished itself in the fight against the Ebola epidemic in West Africa and stepped forward to assist in many epidemics around the world, including dengue fever, HIV, swine flu, and hepatitis; and

WHEREAS, Fifty countries have requested aid from the brigade, with over 2000 Cuban health workers currently serving in the battle against COVID-19 in more than 28 countries; and

WHEREAS, Cuba offers treatment regimens for patients and prevention protocols for health workers including its drug Interferon Alpha 2B Recombinant, now in standard use in China and Cuba; and

WHEREAS, More than 42 countries have expressed an interest in acquiring this pharmaceutical, the medication is not available in the United States due to increased restrictions against collaboration with Cuba; and

WHEREAS, Worldwide, some 80% of COVID-19 patients in critical condition are dying, by contrast, in Cuba, 80% in critical and serious condition are now being saved; and

WHEREAS, The recent reduction in deaths of severely ill COVID-19 patients in Cuba is largely attributed to two treatments, beginning in April, 2020, that appear to help calm the “cytokine storm,” a dangerous overresponse by the immune system; and

WHEREAS, There is precedent for collaborative initiatives between Cuba and other U.S. cities and states, as demonstrated by the City and County of San Francisco, the City of Richmond, California and the City of Berkeley, which all unanimously passed a resolution supporting medical collaboration, and the Minnesota Legislature which has introduced a similar measure; and

WHEREAS, There have also been multi-year joint ventures between Cuba's Center for Molecular Immunology and Buffalo's Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in developing CIMAvax, the Cuban lung cancer vaccine, as well as a collaboration between medical personnel from Cuba and the University of Illinois on infant mortality in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, In 2015 the World Health Organization recognized Cuba's medical system as a worldwide leader in biotechnology, and Cuba has made significant contributions to the international medical field, including a drug that prevents 77% of diabetic amputations; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. blockade of Cuba has severely restricted collaboration on scientific and medical research; and

WHEREAS, People in the Sacramento Central Labor Council's jurisdiction, California and the world would benefit from Cuban biotechnical, medical, and public health expertise in combating the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Sacramento Central Labor Council contact and urge the State Department of Public Health and Departments of Public Health in its jurisdiction to explore collaborations with Cuba to jointly face the COVID-19 pandemic, including initiating knowledge transfer about Cuba's highly successful public health prevention methods, methods for preventing infection of health workers, and innovative treatments now being used in China and elsewhere;

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Sacramento Central Labor Council contact the City Councils and Boards of Supervisors within its jurisdiction to support this resolution and pass similar resolutions; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Sacramento Central Labor Council supports the lifting of restrictions on the Cuban COVID-19 treatment Interferon Alfa 2b, opening a path for it to enter clinical trials; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Sacramento Central Labor Council urges the U.S. Congress and the President to lift restrictions on access to Cuban medical expertise in order to more effectively combat the COVID-19 pandemic by suspending U.S. economic and travel sanctions against Cuba; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Sacramento Central Labor Council contact each federal representative in its jurisdiction to call on the federal government to cease ongoing measures that deter Cuba from importing medical equipment and medicines to confront COVID-19, and cease attempts to stop other countries from accepting Cuban medical brigades and assistance-; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Sacramento Central Labor Council issue press releases regarding the details of this resolution to its media contacts within its jurisdiction.