



CUBAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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Mr. Mickey Arison
Chairman
Carnival Cruise Lines
3655 NW 87th Avenue
Miami, FL 33178

Dear Mr. Arison:

On behalf of the Cuban American Bar Association (“CABA”), a bar association representing the Cuban American legal community, including many of your South Florida customers, we write you regarding cruises to Cuba by Fathom, a cruise line company wholly owned by Carnival Corporation.

As you are aware, it has recently come to light that Cuban-born Americans are prohibited from booking trips aboard Fathom’s soon-to-be launched cruises to Cuba. *See* Fabiola Santiago, *Carnival Cruise To Cuba Discriminates Against Class of Americans*, MIAMI HERALD, April 7, 2016. Confronted with its decision to impose a categorical ban against a significant portion of South Florida’s residents (and many of Carnival’s employees and shareholders) based on their country of origin, Carnival’s spokespersons say that Fathom cannot accommodate Cuba-born persons because “current Cuban law prohibits [them] from entering Cuba via ship or sea vessel.” Having investigated the accuracy of this statement, it appears that, in reality, Carnival is acquiescing to an unwritten, ad hoc policy by the Cuban Government, which, clearly, remains intent on tightly controlling the nature of any allegedly “open” cultural exchanges between Cubans and Americans, and on prohibiting the type of “tourists” who might inconveniently bring to light Cuba’s deplorable human rights.

In essence, Mr. Arison, you have elected to partner with one of the most repressive regimes in the world—the Cuban Government—in effectively imposing a travel ban on a select group of Americans, many of whom have supported your company from its infancy, before it was worth billions of dollars. We are not surprised that the Cuban Government wants to exclude Cuban Americans from Fathom’s cruises to Cuba. The only type of American tourists that Cuba wants are those who will frequent its tourist resorts and hotels—from which Cubans themselves are excluded—while turning a blind eye to the plight of the Cuban people. No doubt, Cuban Americans, having lived under and fled Cuba’s totalitarian regime, are not the type of anodyne tourists that the Cuban Government wants to welcome to the island. We are, however, surprised that you chose to appease the Cuban Government by implementing an exclusionary policy that is intended to suppress the freedom of travel and of expression of Cuban Americans. We are surprised that you would assent to a policy of immoral discrimination, which harkens back to the 1960s, when Cubans, fleeing Fidel Castro’s dictatorial regime and finding refuge in the United States, were often confronted with prejudice and discrimination. And, we are surprised that you so blatantly have chosen corporate profit over principle adopting the totalitarian regime’s unwritten regulation that upon information and belief, can be imposed on any person seeking entry to Cuba via ship or sea vessel. On behalf of the Cuban American community, we express our profound disappointment in your decision.

Whilst many in our ranks disagree that Carnival should be conducting these cruises to begin with, that is not the present subject of our objection to your company's decision to move forward under these circumstances. However, the fact that you have allowed yourselves to serve as conduits for the Castro regime's disdain of, and discrimination against, Cuba-born exiles to whom they refer to as *gusanos* (worms) is, quite frankly, reprehensible. The lack of sensitivity or concern for a significant group of persons who call Miami their home, a city whose port accommodates your vessels and serves your business, is an open-handed slap to our community. It is equally surprising that the course of action would be endorsed by Carnival's corporate leadership, some of whom are descendants of people victimized by totalitarian regimes and otherwise excluded from equal enjoyment of life, liberty and happiness. We sincerely hope that you will reconsider this business enterprise and set aside corporate profit and the dubious distinction of being the first cruise line to re-engage in travel from the US to Cuba and choose, instead, to subscribe to our American principles of equality and human dignity for all.

Accordingly, we ask that you reconsider your decision to have Fathom provide cruises to Cuba under these conditions. Carnival should not agree to any travel arrangement or policy that discriminates on the basis of race, creed, or nationality—especially at the behest of a foreign dictatorship. Carnival should instead follow the lead of its competitor Norwegian Cruise Lines. When the Tunisian government refused to allow passengers of Israeli origin to disembark at the Tunisia port, Norwegian simply cancelled all cruise service to Tunisia. Discussing the decision, the CEO of Norwegian stated: "We want to send a strong message to Tunisia and ports around the world that we will not tolerate such random acts of discrimination against our guests . . . We apologize sincerely to our guests who were affected and want them to know that we have taken the appropriate action in response." Gene Sloan, *Norwegian Drops Calls in Tunisia in Wake of Incident*, USA TODAY, March 11, 2014. We expect and hope that Carnival would have a similar response in this situation.

Very truly yours,



Anna Marie Hernandez
President

cc: CABA Board of Directors