

# MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 14(A)(2)

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**TO:** Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**DATE:** May 20, 2025

**FROM:** Geri Bonzon-Keenan  
County Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Resolution expressing the Board's intent to acknowledge May 20th as Cuban Independence Day and to condemn the Cuban government's many human rights abuses; and urging and calling on President Donald J. Trump and the federal government to take all necessary steps to stand against these abuses

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The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Natalie Milian Orbis.



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Geri Bonzon-Keenan  
County Attorney

GBK/jp

MDC001



# MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

**TO:** Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

**DATE:** May 20, 2025

**FROM:**   
Glen Bonzon-Keenan  
County Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item No. 14(A)(2)

Please note any items checked.

- ☐ "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- ☐ 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- ☐ 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- ☐ Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- ☐ Budget required
- ☐ Statement of fiscal impact required
- ☐ Statement of social equity required
- ☐ Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- ☒ No committee review
- ☐ Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's present \_\_\_\_, 2/3 membership \_\_\_\_, 3/5's \_\_\_\_, unanimous \_\_\_\_, majority plus one \_\_\_\_, CDMP 7 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3)(h) or (4)(c) \_\_\_\_, CDMP 2/3 vote requirement per 2-116.1(3) (h) or (4)(c) \_\_\_\_, CDMP 9 vote requirement per 2-116.1(4)(c) (2) \_\_\_\_) to approve
- ☐ Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Mayor  
Veto \_\_\_\_\_  
Override \_\_\_\_\_

Agenda Item No. 14(A)(2)  
5-20-25

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE BOARD'S INTENT TO  
ACKNOWLEDGE MAY 20TH AS CUBAN INDEPENDENCE  
DAY AND TO CONDEMN THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT'S  
MANY HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES; AND URGING AND  
CALLING ON PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP AND THE  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY  
STEPS TO STAND AGAINST THESE ABUSES

**WHEREAS**, following the Cuban War of Independence against Spain, the island was largely under the control and protection of the United States until May 20, 1902, when the Republic of Cuba was officially formed; and

**WHEREAS**, this first Republic of Cuba lasted until Fidel Castro took power after the violent communist revolution, which culminated in 1959; and

**WHEREAS**, for over half a century, the Cuban people have suffered under an authoritarian Communist regime that has systematically denied the Cuban people basic human rights and fundamental freedoms; and

**WHEREAS**, among other abuses, the Cuban government has never held free and fair elections of its leaders; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cuban government has also undertaken abusive foreign labor programs, which United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio has correctly described as "forced labor"; and

**WHEREAS**, under the programs, laborers are sent overseas, stripped of their passport, and forced to relinquish to the Cuban government the payments that were supposed to go to the laborers; and

**WHEREAS**, this forced labor program is particularly egregious in the context of doctors and medical workers, who are sent overseas for profit despite a severe lack of medical services and supplies in Cuba; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cuban government regularly imprisons anyone on the island who dares to comment negatively on the government; and

**WHEREAS**, Miami-Dade County is home to hundreds of thousands of Cuban exiles who were political prisoners or otherwise had to flee the abuses and the famines imposed by the Cuban communist regime; and

**WHEREAS**, in seeking to secure basic human rights by escaping the island, countless Cubans have died in the process, including due to direct actions by the Cuban government; and

**WHEREAS**, for example, on February 24, 1996, the Cuban Air Force, without warning, shot down in international airspace two unarmed civilian planes operated by “Hermanos al Rescate” (Brothers to Rescue), a Miami-based activist nonprofit organization that sought to assist refugees escaping Cuba by raft; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cuban government has never acknowledged its human rights violations and has instead attempted to erase or rewrite historical events, as reflected in the government’s refusal to recognize May 20th as Cuban Independence Day; and

**WHEREAS**, despite the Cuban government’s efforts, the Cuban diaspora in Miami-Dade County and elsewhere continue to celebrate May 20th as Cuban Independence Day; and

**WHEREAS**, Miami-Dade County wishes to show solidarity with Cuban exiles by expressing its intent to acknowledge May 20th as Cuban Independence Day, by condemning the Cuban government's numerous historical and continuing human rights abuses, by calling for free and fair elections of Cuba's leadership and for the regime to liberate all political prisoners, and by urging and calling upon President Donald J. Trump and the federal government to take any steps necessary to stand against these abuses,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**, that this Board:

**Section 1.** Expresses its intent to acknowledge May 20th as Cuban Independence Day and to condemn the many historical and ongoing human rights abuses by the Cuban government.

**Section 2.** Urges President Donald J. Trump and the federal government to take all necessary action to stand against ongoing human rights abuses by the Cuban government, including its jailing of social and political dissidents and its refusal to hold free and fair elections.

**Section 3.** Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to President Donald J. Trump, United States Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio, United States Senate Majority Leader John R. Thune, United States House Speaker James Michael Johnson, and the Chair and Members of the Florida Congressional Delegation.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Natalie Milian Orbis. It was offered by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman

Kionne L. McGhee, Vice Chairman

Marleine Bastien

Sen. René García

Roberto J. Gonzalez

Danielle Cohen Higgins

Natalie Milian Orbis

Micky Steinberg

Juan Carlos Bermudez

Oliver G. Gilbert, III

Keon Hardemon

Eileen Higgins

Raquel A. Regalado

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2025. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
BY ITS BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JUAN FERNANDEZ-BARQUIN, CLERK

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as  
to form and legal sufficiency.

Luis M. Reyes

