

MEMORANDUM

Amended
Agenda Item No. 14(A)(1)

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

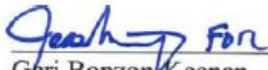
DATE: May 19, 2026

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 continue to take all necessary steps to stand against these abuses

Resolution No. R-439-26

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Co-Prime Sponsors Commissioner Natalie Milian Orbis and Chairman Anthony Rodriguez, and Co-Sponsors Commissioner Juan Carlos Bermudez, Senator René García, Commissioner Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Commissioner Roberto J. Gonzalez, Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins, Commissioner Vicki L. Lopez, Vice Chairman Kionne L. McGhee, Commissioner Raquel A. Regalado and Commissioner Micky Steinberg.



Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

GBK/smm



MEMORANDUM (Revised)

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

DATE: May 19, 2026

FROM: 
Gen Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Amended
Agenda Item No. 14(A)(1)

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
- ☐ Requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's present ____, 2/3 membership ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____, majority plus one ____, CDMP 7 votes (majority of membership) ____, CDMP 2/3 members present but not less than 7 votes (majority of membership) ____, CDMP 9 votes (2/3 membership) ____) to approve
- ☐ Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Amended
Agenda Item No. 14(A)(1)
5-19-26

RESOLUTION NO. R-439-26

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 CONTINUE 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 communist regime 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's actions repeatedly reflect a policy of employing resources for military and clandestine operations at the expense of its citizens' quality of life; and

WHEREAS, for example, the recent United States government operation that resulted in the capture of Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro revealed that the Cuban government secretly employed intelligence agents to serve as Maduro's personal guard; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the Cuban government has regularly employed spies and informants to jail and punish citizens who express any criticisms of the government; and

WHEREAS, former political prisoners have reported abusive conditions in Cuban prisons, including physical abuse, solitary confinement, unsanitary conditions, and lack of access to food and clean water; and

WHEREAS, as evidence of these abuses, photos of a Cuban national, Alexander Diaz Rodriguez—who recently completed a four-year jail sentence for peacefully protesting living conditions in 2021—show he was deeply emaciated and was described as looking like a concentration camp survivor; and

WHEREAS, following substantial economic and political pressure from the United States, the Cuban government announced in April that it would begin releasing just over 2,000 prisoners but has rebuffed calls to release political prisoners; and

WHEREAS, various human rights groups have noted that swaths of political prisoners remain unjustly incarcerated, with estimates ranging from many hundreds to over one thousand people; and

WHEREAS, despite international condemnation, the Cuban government has continued to arrest political dissidents, including people of faith and teenagers, like Jonathan Muir Burgos, a sixteen-year-old with significant medical ailments who was placed in a maximum-security prison and faces a seven-year minimum sentence for charges stemming from his alleged participation in an anti-government protest; 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 supports all lawful efforts to hold accountable those responsible for the 1996 shootdown of the unarmed Brothers to the Rescue humanitarian aircraft in international airspace, including any potential criminal charges pursued against Cuban dictator Raul Castro for his alleged role in the murder of four innocent men, including three United States citizens; 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 continue 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 continue 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, and to hold accountable those responsible for the 1996 Brothers to the Rescue shootdown and other human rights abuses committed by the Cuban communist regime.

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, the

Chair and Members of the Florida Congressional Delegation, the United States Department of Justice, Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, and United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida Jason A. Reding Quiñones.

The Co-Prime Sponsors of the foregoing resolution are Commissioner Natalie Milian Orbis and Chairman Anthony Rodriguez, and the Co-Sponsors are Commissioner Juan Carlos Bermudez, Senator René García, Commissioner Oliver G. Gilbert, III, Commissioner Roberto J. Gonzalez, Commissioner Danielle Cohen Higgins, Commissioner Vicki L. Lopez, Vice Chairman Kionne L. McGhee, Commissioner Raquel A. Regalado and Commissioner Micky Steinberg. It was offered by Commissioner **Natalie Milian Orbis**, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner **Vicki L. Lopez** and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Anthony Rodriguez, Chairman	aye
Kionne L. McGhee, Vice Chairman	aye
Marleine Bastien	absent
Sen. René García	aye
Roberto J. Gonzalez	aye
Danielle Cohen Higgins	aye
Natalie Milian Orbis	aye
Micky Steinberg	absent
Juan Carlos Bermudez	aye
Oliver G. Gilbert, III	aye
Keon Hardemon	aye
Vicki L. Lopez	aye
Raquel A. Regalado	aye

The Chairperson thereupon declared this resolution duly passed and adopted this 19th day of May, 2026. 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: Basia Pruna
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "LR", is written over a horizontal line.

Luis M. Reyes