

Closing Ceremony Remarks from Havana, Cuba Delivered to Cuban Hosts, Members of the United States Cultural Mission to Cuba 2016, and Media April 21, 2016

By Chairman Jane Chu

As this historic trip draws to a close, I want to thank the Cuban government for inviting us to this beautiful country, as well as the people of Cuba for giving us such a warm welcome.

Over the past few decades, our two countries have both shared a common connection - a love of the arts - through music, art, dance, and theater. Even when we lived in isolation from each other, our appreciation for your cultural heritage has always been present.

So experiencing Cuba these past few days has felt like rediscovering a long-time friend. As we've become reacquainted, we have all been captivated by Cuba's energy and spirit. We have met your artists, visited your schools, and toured your museums. Immersing ourselves in your culture has truly enriched us all.

To continue this cultural exchange, we are very excited to be able to announce the expansion of two programs. The National Endowment for the Arts will provide \$50,000 to US Artists International, which will send American artists to Cuba to perform. Although this program has brought American artists to Cuba in the past, this is the first time the U.S. government will be providing financial support for this exchange.

In addition, we are adding \$50,000 to our Southern Exposure program. The Southern Exposure program brings contemporary and traditional performing artists from Latin America to the United States for public performances and engagement with audiences across our country. This funding will be reserved specifically for Cuban artists, and we look forward to embracing your artists in America, just as you have embraced ours.

This \$100,000 is not a one-time contribution. Instead, it represents the beginning of a long-term investment which will strengthen the cultural connection between our two nations. Both of these exchange opportunities will further enrich the conversations between our two countries. It will provide even more opportunities for personal interaction. By sharing our art forms with each other—person to person and community to community—we are creating new paths for understanding, appreciation, and fraternity.

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It is an honor to be a part of this new chapter in our Cuban-American relationship, and I look forward to a future of collaboration and creativity!

Thank you.