

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

S.C.R. 54  
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Natural Resources  
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Introduced

### **DIGEST**

The relationship between the United States and Cuba has long been marked by tension and confrontation; further heightening this hostility is the 40-year-old U.S. trade embargo against the island nation that remains the longest-standing embargo in modern history. Cuba imports nearly a billion dollars' worth of food every year, including approximately 1,100,000 tons of wheat, 420,000 tons of rice, 37,000 tons of poultry, and 60,000 tons of dairy products; these amounts are expected to grow significantly in coming years as Cuba slowly recovers from the severe economic recession it has endured following the withdrawal of subsidies from the former Soviet Union in the last decade. Agriculture is the second-largest industry in Texas, and this state ranks among the top five states in overall value of agricultural exports at more than \$3 billion annually; thus, Texas is ideally positioned to benefit from the market opportunities that free trade with Cuba would provide. Rather than depriving Cuba of agricultural products, the U.S. embargo succeeds only in driving sales to competitors in other countries that have no such restrictions. In recent years, Cuba has developed important pharmaceutical products, namely, a new meningitis B vaccine that has virtually eliminated the disease in Cuba; such products have the potential to protect Americans against diseases that continue to threaten large populations around the world. Cuba's potential oil reserves have attracted the interest of numerous other countries who have been helping Cuba develop its existing wells and search for new reserves; Cuba's oil output has increased more than 400 percent over the last decade. The United States' trade, financial, and travel restrictions against Cuba hinder Texas' export of agricultural and food products, its ability to import critical energy products, the treatment of illnesses experienced by Texans, and the right of Texans to travel freely.

### **PURPOSE**

As proposed, S.C.R. 54 submits the following resolutions:

That the 77th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to consider the removal of trade, financial, and travel restrictions relating to Cuba. That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.