

DESERT GREENS GREEN PARTY OF UTAH

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Desert Greens Green Party of Utah Candidates Support the Pastors for Peace Non-Violent Challenge to US Blockade of Cuba – 17th Caravan to Cuba to stop in Salt Lake City

Pastors for Peace and hundreds of volunteers from the US and 7 other countries are slated to cross the US border into Mexico on July 2nd challenging US restrictions on travel and aid to Cuba. The Caravan will be stopping in Salt Lake City on Saturday, July 24th. People for Peace and Justice of Utah has organized a free public event at Free Speech Zone (2144 South Highland Drive) beginning at 5pm for the Press and 7pm for the public.

Desert Greens Green Party Candidates have endorsed the Caravan to Cuba event.

Deanna Taylor, candidate for Salt Lake County Council District 5, states "The U.S. government tells Americans that they cannot go to Cuba. I say they should. Americans need to see things for themselves. Cubans need our assistance. To create a blockade of the distribution of humanitarian aid to Cuba is immoral and violates the premise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

"There is no justifiable humane reason to maintain the cruel embargo against the Cuban people," **says Tom King, State House District 43 Candidate**

"A blockade of Cuba only hurts Cuba's citizens and helps Castro to make America look evil," says **Kathy Dopp, candidate for Summit County Clerk**. "Trade blockades of a country have not been an effective tactic to overthrow a government since the days of city-states. Blockades merely dis-empower the people from having the resources to overthrow a ruler and make the country doing the blockading look like a 'bad guy'".

According to Pastors for Peace, in November 2005 the countries in the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly (182-4) to call for the end of the blockade. A month later Condoleza Rice stated that the US government's "Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba" is considering more blockade-tightening measures to be announced in May 2006. US policy towards Cuba is totally isolated internationally, increasingly discredited domestically and subject to many challenges from within Congress. **Desert Greens Candidates stand in solidarity** with the Friendshipment members in responding to whatever new measures Bush devises that maximizes the most support and publicity.

The 17th Friendshipment is traveling on 13 different routes to visit more than 120 US and Canadian cities. It is traveling in school buses, trucks, and cars to Cuba via Mexico with medical and educational supplies collected from groups across the US and Canada, refusing US Treasury Department licenses, as a collective challenge to the blockade and travel ban.

- Pastors for Peace has used hunger strikes and mass mobilizations to successfully challenge the US governments past attempts to confiscate vehicles and humanitarian aid crossing the Mexican border on its way to Cuba. Since 1992, IFCO/Pastors for Peace has delivered more than 2,350 tons of urgently needed assistance to the Cuban people without seeking a US Treasury license.

While the US government sends it soldiers round the world, Cuba sends its doctors, with for instance 15,000 of them currently providing free health care to the Venezuelan people, just as their compatriots provide free health care to the Cuban people.

- While the US government trains Latin American military personnel at its School of the Americas in Georgia, Cuba is providing free medical training for thousands of economically poor young people from across the Americas (including the US) at its Latin American Medical School.
- While the US government did nothing as Hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans, the Cuban government evacuates its people out of the path of hurricanes.

The event at Free Speech Zone will include distribution of literature on the Caravan to Cuba and outreach on the project, as well as invitations to people to join the caravan.

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