

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ALERT

12/17/14

### U.S. and Cuba to Reestablish Diplomatic Relations

Earlier today, President Barack Obama announced that the U.S. and Cuba are set to normalize diplomatic relations, marking a thaw in one of the last remaining remnants of Cold War-era foreign policy.

As a part of resuming diplomatic relations with Cuba, the U.S. will reopen an embassy in Havana and engage in high-level discussions and visits between the Cuban capital and Washington. Though the President's executive actions will officially ease travel to the Caribbean island nation for family and official U.S. governmental activities, tourist travel remains banned. Other restrictions on the import of Cuban goods by travelers and the transmission of U.S. currency from Americans to Cubans will be eased, but not eliminated. A complete end to the economic embargo on Cuba, which was passed by Congress, will require legislative action to overturn.

With a Republican-dominated Congress set to take over in January, the future of the embargo remains uncertain, given the long-standing antipathy of the party to the Castro regime. Senator Bob Corker, Republican of Tennessee, who will take over as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, remarked, "The new U.S. policy announced by the administration is no doubt sweeping, and as of now there is no real understanding as to what changes the Cuban government is prepared to make. We will be closely examining the implications of these major policy changes in the next Congress."

The government relations team at Roetzel will follow the next steps in this remarkable change in U.S. foreign policy closely. Please address any questions to the following Roetzel attorneys.

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