

## Cuba to have historic election

*by UPI*

HAVANA -- Cuba has scheduled historic elections that could determine whether ailing leader Fidel Castro remains the head of state, Granma newspaper reported Wednesday. The election -- scheduled for Jan. 20 -- would be for a new national assembly. Castro would have to be re-elected to the assembly to maintain his leadership of the communist island. The 81-year-old Castro handed over authority to his younger brother Raul in July 2006 after announcing he suffered from a gastrointestinal illness, though he still maintains his title as head of state. In a recent poll of Cubans, 74 percent said they wanted to vote for a new leader to replace Castro, said the U.S.-funded International Republican Institute, which conducted the poll without telling those Cubans asked that their answers were being tabulated.

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