

Supporters to push Cuba policy changes

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- An array of U.S. lawmakers and interest groups are rallying around a new push to re-examine economic sanctions imposed on Cuba, observers say.

Politicians such as Senate Democratic Policy Committee Chairman Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, Banking Committee Chairman Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., and Senate Foreign Relations Committee member Richard Lugar, R-Ind., as well as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Human Rights Watch, are teaming up on an effort to change Cuba policy, The Washington Post reported Monday.

They were planning a news conference Tuesday to introduce legislation that would lift the U.S. travel ban on Cuba and loosen restrictions on sales of agricultural products to the island nation, one year after Raul Castro succeeded his brother Fidel as president, the newspaper said.

Previous efforts in Congress were reportedly doomed by opposition from former U.S. President George W. Bush, but current President Barack Obama this month lifted restrictions on travel to the island by Cuban-Americans with relatives there.

"After 47 years the unilateral embargo on Cuba has failed to achieve its stated purpose of 'bringing democracy to the Cuban people,'" Lugar wrote in a report last month.

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