

PRESIDENT	J. Michael Smith, Esq. CA, DC, VA
VICE PRESIDENT	James R. Mason III, Esq. OR, DC
SENIOR COUNSEL	Scott A. Woodruff, Esq. VA, MO Darren A. Jones, Esq. CA, DC Michael P. Donnelly, Esq. MA, NH, WV, DC
ATTORNEY	Thomas J. Schmidt, Esq. CA Peter K. Kamakawiwoole, Esq. MO, VA Daniel T. Beasley, Esq. CA, WI
OF COUNSEL	Mary E. Schofield, Esq. CA Tom Sanders, Esq. TX

April 16, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Open Letter regarding Cuban Pastor Ramón Rigal

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to ask for your help on a matter of great importance to our community and one that touches our cherished principles of religious freedom, the institution of the family and our nation's exceptional and unique place in the world as a shining city on a hill.

On April 15th, two Cuban fathers were jailed for homeschooling their children. These fathers, like Cuban Pastor Ramon Rigal in 2017, have been treated like criminals – simply because they have chosen to homeschool their children in accordance with their Christian faith. It is uncertain if or when they will be released. On March 22, 2019, Pastor Ramon, had been arrested, interrogated, and threatened with prison and the forced removal of his children – unless he stopped homeschooling. He was ordered to tell other Christian families, like the two arrested yesterday, to stop as well. Ramon determined to leave Cuba. But, after authorities told him he could leave, and HSLDA made travel arrangements for his family, Cuban officials abruptly changed their minds preventing their departure just hours before their flights. He implored me to write to you to ask for your help.

I understand that you have several homeschooled interns and graduates working for you. Almost 4% of the school-aged population in our nation is now homeschooled. The Supreme Court has long recognized the



right of parents to “direct the education and upbringing” of children as a fundamental right—and an enduring tradition deeply rooted in our history. Home education has been recognized in all 50 states and territories since 1996, and voluminous research continues to prove its effectiveness.

With just a few powerful characters of prose on Twitter and instructions to your administration, you can help protect Pastor Ramón and set an example for others to follow. Thank you for your outstanding leadership, service to our country, and your anticipated help.

Most respectfully yours,



J. Michael Smith, Esq.
President



Michael P. Donnelly, Esq.
Senior Counsel, Director of
Global Outreach

MPD/tam

CC:

Vice-President Michael Pence

Secretary of State Michael Pompeo

Ambassador-at-Large for Religious Freedom Samuel Brownback

Commissioners of the United States Congressional Commission on
International Religious Freedom

Cuban Ambassador Sr. José Ramón Cabañas

Senators James Risch and Robert Menendez, Chair and Ranking Member of
the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Representatives Eliot Engel and Michael McCaul, Chair and Ranking
Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee