

March 23, 2016

Word Count 222

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QuickPoint! – Where Did President Obama Stay in Cuba?

By Steve Buckstein

This week, Barack Obama became the first U.S. President in nearly 90 years to visit the country of Cuba. While security concerns may have prevented him staying in a private home rented through [Airbnb](#), he would have had some [2,700 such homes to choose from in Havana alone](#).

The amazing thing is that Cuba is a communist country, yet it allows short-term room rental services to operate, while [some major American cities such as Atlanta, Denver, and Los Angeles do not](#).

While the American President likely rode through the streets of Havana in his own armored limousine, he apparently could have ridden in one of those iconic 57 Chevys if the driver had one of the still rare and expensive Cuban email accounts. Such [ride-sharing services are also allowed in Havana](#), while [Uber](#) and [Lyft](#) are still fighting powerful taxi monopolies in some American cities.

We can have legitimate disagreements about normalizing diplomatic and economic relations with Cuba; but we should applaud [the movement toward private home ownership](#) and use, and the entrepreneurial opportunities its communist government now allows.

It will be ironic if Cuba comes into the modern free-market era at the same time that some American politicians try to impose more government restrictions on the very economic freedoms that many Cuban refugees risked their lives to achieve by coming here.

Steve Buckstein is Founder and Senior Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.

