

Cuban Government 101

Although the United States labels Cuba a Communist country, the system is a **Socialist Republic**.

609 members of the National Assembly of the People's Power are elected at a grass roots "neighbourhood" level termed Committees for the Defense of the Revolution - CDRs.

Under Cuba's system of democracy, members of the National Assembly must not only represent local CDR communities but also members of the National Association of Small Farmers, Young Socialist League (exemplary students), the Cuban Women's Federation, assorted manufacturing and other unions as well as Post Secondary student unions. Unlike countries like Canada where only 20% of parliament in 2006 was female, women make up a significant portion of the Cuban government.

Elections

Citizens must be 16 years or older in order to vote. All children study politics from grade 1 and in grade 3 become "guardians of the ballot boxes"... that is, every ballot box is guarded by a minimum of one 15 year old (not yet allowed to vote) and two younger students. A "non-military" supervising adult (usually a teacher) is present. No military or police are permitted directly outside polling stations. As well, students in groups of three supervised from a distance by a teacher, carry election ballots to house-bound adults. The elector is allowed a secret ballot and placement in a sealed box. (In most other countries, invalids and elders are expected to make their way to polling stations). Students may vote at age 16.

Members of the National Assembly vote by secret ballot for the person most qualified to be President. After the revolution and from 1959 to 1976 Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado. During this time Fidel Castro served as Prime Minister. Since 1977 to date Fidel Castro has been elected President.

For a more complete understanding of Cuban politics, see [Isaac Saney's](#) book, Cuba – "A Revolution in Motion"

Official site of the government of Cuba

<http://www.cubagob.gov.cu/ingles/>

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<http://www.netforcuba.org/InfoCuba-EN/Government/Structure.htm>

Changing US opinion on Cuba- [Report to the USA Congress on Cuba](#)