

## Crush the Silence

Dear Mrs. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen,

Congratulations on becoming a member of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. This year will be remembered for its many historic events. COVID-19 is one event that has impacted me and has also affected our moral principles. The Coronavirus was censored in its early stage and this act of silence has violated our human rights. Some of your many accomplishments such as becoming the first Cuban American and Latina elected to Congress and especially your outstanding role in the Cuban-American lobby have all inspired me to work towards making things better.

Like you, my mother was also born in Havana, Cuba. One of many stories of her youth was having to wear a red color fabric collar around her neck. This dress code served to symbolize the power of Fidel Castro abuse over the people. At the age of fourteen, she risked her life when boarding a small, crowded boat that was heading into rough waters. Knowing the possibility of the boat capsizing, it was worth the chance coming to America land of the free.

The Castro regime is not the only one still in existence today. I learned that the Chinese Government enforced early restriction to suppress information about Covid 19 and the danger it has to our health. It was criticized that the epidemic was allowed to spread for sometime before an attempt was made to contain the virus. Some doctors in China were detained for "spreading false rumors" when they warned others about the coronavirus.

A question I have is why our government did not react faster to the warnings of several intelligence agencies in foreign affairs. The virus would have spread slower if we would have been alerted sooner. Laboratories would have had a head start months in advance to produce a

vaccine. As of last week, Covid 19 has claimed more than 100,000 lives. Our rights have been violated by the silence of issues related to this pandemic.

It is hard for me to write that my Abuelita passed away a few days before Thanksgiving. Our family was informed of her having liver cancer three weeks earlier while attending a routine doctor's visit. She fought the pain mostly at the hospital and due to the CDC guidelines for the Coronavirus, I was not allowed inside the hospital.

I feel sad not being able to be by her side and offer my love and support. My family and I miss her very much. I would have liked spending more time with her while she was alive.

Although I agree with the hospital rules, I disagree with how our Government and associates handled Covid 19. My viewpoint of this is to inform everyone that our government needs to be transparent regarding anything of danger to public health. Also, spend more time with your family and loved ones. Please be kind to others and especially the elderly. I hope we learn from the mistakes performed during this pandemic to make a healthier and better society.