

**Reps. Ron DeSantis, Joaquin Castro Introduce Bipartisan Resolution to Recognize July 15, 2016 as
Sister Cities International Day**

**Members of Congress Unite to Celebrate the Impact that Sister Cities International has made for over 60
Years of Building Peace between Communities around the Globe**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 9, 2016) – Today, Congressman Ron DeSantis (R-FL) and Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-TX) introduced legislation to recognize Sister Cities International Day. Sister Cities International was founded 60 years ago as a Presidential initiative by President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the White House Conference on citizen diplomacy. The organization’s mission to create more community-led global relationships so that people of different cultures could appreciate their differences and build partnerships that would lessen the chance of new national conflicts still thrives today.

The network itself is comprised of 570 member cities that hold over 2,300 partnerships across 150 countries on six continents. Both Congressmen DeSantis and Castro boast many sister cities in their own districts that thrive due to the participation of countless volunteers, students, and policy makers that work incredibly hard to keep their partnerships full of meaning.

Rep. DeSantis’ district city of [San Augustine, FL](#) currently holds partnerships with George-Town, Great Exuma, Bahamas; The Cartagena de Indias, Colombia; San Miguel de Allende, Mexico; Aviles, Spain and Ciudadella de Menorca, Spain. These partnerships participate in everything from architectural exchange, student exchanges, and even a partnership between Florida School for the Deaf and Blind and the Juan Salvador Gaviota School for the Deaf in Cartagena.

“The partnerships developed by Sister Cities International have helped foster peace by cultivating connections between different cultures,” DeSantis said. “Partnering our communities with international cities provides the opportunity to develop relationships and projects that benefit our relations with people in foreign countries. For the past 60 years, Sister Cities International has had a positive impact on my district and beyond, and I am proud to introduce this resolution to designate July 15, 2016 as Sister Cities International Day.”

[San Antonio](#), a city in Rep. Castro’s district, has been a very active member of the sister cities network for decades and even hosted the organization’s annual conference in 2013. San Antonio has a robust youth program and most recently assisted their sister city Kumamoto, Japan in its earthquake recovery operations. San Antonio’s nine sister cities include: Chennai, India; Kumamoto, Japan; Guadalajara, Mexico; Monterrey, Mexico; Gwangju, South Korea; Las Palmas, Canary Islands, Spain; Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain; Kaohsiung, Taiwan; Wuxi, China.

“San Antonio’s international profile is on the rise, and our sister city relationships have helped make that possible. Through these partnerships, San Antonio has been able to build strong cultural, educational, and economic ties with communities around the world. This engagement has led to student exchanges, non-profit collaboration, and foreign direct investment that benefits our city’s economy. In today’s tumultuous world, the mutual understanding and respect that Sister Cities International fosters is particularly valuable and worthy of special recognition.”

Mary Kane, President and CEO of Sister Cities International, stated, “The concept of citizen and people-to-people exchange has always been an essential first step to building mutual understanding and respect between nations and their citizens. As we’ve seen time and again in the years since Sister Cities International was founded, governments (and even countries) come and go, but cities and their people remain. We hope this global day will help more people understand the important role that everyone plays in making this world a more peaceful place.”

Sister Cities International Day is a call to action for Americans and citizens of the world to come together to celebrate the importance of their communities’ continued commitment to supporting a more peaceful and prosperous future through continued people to people exchanges and city to city partnerships. This day will provide the perfect time for Americans to come together and show how powerful humanity can be when united to promote peace, progress and prosperity for a better world.

Learn about SCI’s 60th anniversary celebration at <http://sistercitiesconference.org>.

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About Sister Cities International

Founded as a Presidential Initiative by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, Sister Cities International serves as the national membership organization for 570 member communities with 2,300 partnerships in 150 countries on six continents. The sister city network unites tens of thousands of citizen diplomats and volunteers who work tirelessly to promote the organizations’ mission of creating world peace and understanding through economic development, youth and education, arts and culture, and humanitarian assistance.

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