



Immigration Opportunities for Haitians in the U.S.
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Haiti Six Months Later: Reports from the Ground
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On January 14, the President promised leadership on Haiti. On at least two fronts, many urge bolder Administration action.

Need for a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program

On June 26, a *Washington Post* editorial for the second time, the first on January 29, urged the Administration to parole 55,000 Haitian beneficiaries of *already-approved* visa petitions who otherwise will languish years longer in Haiti due to the visa backlog. Like the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* July 2 editorial urging the Administration to create a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program (FRPP), it cited DHS's creation of a Cuban FRPP in 2007.

Creating a Haitian FRPP would serve the same goals – orderly migration and saving lives at sea – and give Haiti's recovery a needed boost via the resulting flow of remittances to an estimated 550,000 or more Haitians.

Support for a Haitian FRPP is broad. On January 22, Elliot Abrams urged increasing legal immigration to spur remittance flow in a *Washington Post* op-ed. On January 29, the *Washington Post's* editorial board urged paroling the 55,000 approved beneficiaries to do this. On February 4 and 5, Senator Gillibrand and Rep. Yvette Clark introduced S. 2998 and H.R. 4616 to accomplish this, hoping to spur forthcoming Administration action. On March 8 House Democratic leaders joined by four Republicans urged Secretary Napolitano to parole them; on March 12, 75 organizations urged her to create a Haitian FRPP, citing the Cuban FRPP. On March 22 and March 29, the *Miami Herald* editorial board urged the Administration to parole the 55,000; so did Haitian-Americans in their April 5 meeting with Vice President Biden and the U.S. Conference of Mayors in a strongly worded and unanimously passed June 14 resolution. "Haiti Remittances [Are] Key to Earthquake Recovery," reported the World Bank on May 17, but the Administration has yet to act.

Creating a Haitian FRPP or otherwise promptly paroling the 55,000 approved beneficiaries would help at least 550,000 Haitians back home survive and rebuild through the resulting remittances.

Why hasn't the Administration done this? Why should the 55,000 languish years longer unnecessarily in Haiti, part of the burden on its government and the international community, rather than being part of the solution by working here and sending remittances home?

Need for Humanitarian Parole Application Fee Waiver

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) should have the ability to waive the currently non-waivable \$305 fee to apply for humanitarian parole (HP). HP is only for quake victims with *urgent, dire, and special needs* including the double amputees and victims of rapists roaming Haiti's tent cities. Applicants must meet stringent requirements, including who will care for them here. But they can't afford the prohibitive per-person \$305 filing fee. If humanitarian parole is to have meaning in the context of Haiti's tragedy, this fee should be waivable by the agency. Otherwise, HP-qualified quake victims will not be able to apply for it, which would tragically defeat HP's purpose.

Recommendations

We respectfully urge the Obama Administration to take the following actions to alleviate suffering in Haiti:

- Create a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program: Parole 55,000 approved beneficiaries to help 550,000 Haitians survive and rebuild.
- Give USCIS the authority to consider individual fee waiver applications in the context of applications for humanitarian parole.

For More Information, Contact:

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Support for Our Position

"Helping the Haitians," *Philadelphia Inquirer* Editorial. July 2, 2010.

"The U.S. Should Welcome Haitians In," *Washington Post* Editorial. January 29, 2010.

"President Obama Could Rapidly Aid Haitian Immigration Seekers," *Washington Post* Editorial. June 26, 2010.

U.S. Conference of Mayors Resolution #43: Urging Parole for all Haitian Beneficiaries of Approved Immigrant Visa Petitions and Expedited Consideration and Approval of all Pending Immigrant Visa Petitions. June 14, 2010.