



"OUR COMMUNITY -- OUR SOLUTIONS -- OUR COMMITMENT"

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Core Member Associations

HLA  
Haitian Lawyers Association

HANA  
Haitian American Nurses Association

AHED  
Association of Haitian Educators of Dade

HAES  
Haitian- American Association of Engineers  
and Scientists

AHSW  
Association of Haitian Social Workers

HACEPA  
Haitian American Center for Economic  
and Public Affairs

HALEFO  
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Fraternal Organization

HACCOF  
Haitian American Chamber of Commerce of Florida

AEDAP  
Association of Exchange and  
Development of Activities and Partnerships

CAVCP  
Caribbean American Visual Cultural Preservation

FANM  
Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami/ Haitian Women of Miami

MDEI  
Minority Development & Empowerment, Inc.

UHSF  
United Haitian Students of Florida

HODL  
Harmony of the Divine Light

May 31, 2012

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

As the leader of a professional organization comprising of fourteen core associations, I write to express our frustration and disappointment on a matter of concern not only to the Haitian-American community but many others: the inhuman policy of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) toward Haiti in the aftermath of the devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake. There can be no justification for the large number our relatives, long approved to join their families in the United States, left to languish on a waiting list in Haiti of 3 to 11 years, given the devastating conditions there.

For 28 months, since the January 12, 2010 earthquake, we have implored your administration to save lives and help Haiti recover by expediting the parole into the U.S. of our approved relatives. Nearly 100 members of Congress including Senators Cardin, Durbin, Gillibrand, Kerry, Lautenberg, Leahy, Menendez, and Bill Nelson and nearly every member of the Congressional Black Caucus; the editorial boards of the *Washington Post* and the *Miami Herald*, among others; MA Governor Deval Patrick; the North Miami City Council, the South Toms River City Council, the New York City Council, the Philadelphia City Council, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the Republican-controlled Florida State Senate all have urged you to expedite Haitian family reunification.

Moreover, House Foreign Affairs Chair Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Republican Senators Marco Rubio and Scott Brown have written letters imploring your administration to create a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program (FRPP) to "mirror" the Cuban FRPP. All of these elected officials and media entities have urged you to create a Haitian FRPP or otherwise act to expedite Haitian family reunification.

It's important to note what is being asked here is not without precedents. DHS's 2007 Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program (FRPP), later extended by your administration in 2010, has paroled over 30,000 identically-situated Cubans since 2009 alone.



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The Center for Global Development in a paper last June urged your administration to create a Haitian FRPP, saying the Cuban program's rationale of saving lives at sea and providing for orderly migration applies with equal force and that doing so would save lives and generate remittances in Haiti.

On March 22, 2010, in the first of three editorials supporting this, the *Miami Herald* editorial board said, "There is no valid argument for failing to move quickly on this front." On January 9, 2012, Miami Herald editors wrote that "the Obama Administration should say Yes to a bipartisan plea by Florida legislators to speed up visas for more than 100,000 Haitians waiting to join their families." Incidentally, Massachusetts State Representative Linda Dorcena-Forry will soon send you petitions from over 6,000 Americans urging you to do this. So we're still hopeful that you will do the right thing.

Please instruct DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano to either create a Haitian FRPP or at least promptly expedite the parole into the United States of some of the most vulnerable and deserving of the 112,000 DHS-approved beneficiaries languishing in Haiti on an inhumane wait list. She could for example begin with some of the subgroup of 15,000 minor children and spouses of legal permanent residents, whose wait time--despite DHS approvals--is nearly three years.

Despite our frustration and disappointment we still have tremendous hope that you will do the right thing and change these inhumane circumstances through a meaningful policy change, as urged by all.

Thank you for your consideration on this issue.

Sincerely,

Richard Champagne, Esq.  
Haitian American Professionals Coalition, Inc.  
Chairman

cc:

Secretary Janet Napolitano  
Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

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