

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 13, 2015

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to express our concern about recent developments in the Dominican Republic, which negatively impact, in overwhelming majority, Dominican-born individuals of Haitian descent.

As you know, in 2013, the Dominican Republic's Constitutional Tribunal issued a controversial ruling that annulled the citizenship of anyone born in the country after 1929 to parents who could not prove their citizenship. While the Administration of President Medina has taken important steps to mitigate the effects of the ruling, we remain concerned that the process does not encompass the full range of individuals with a legitimate right to remain in the country.

According to the most recent national survey conducted in the Dominican Republic, there are an estimated 210,000 Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent residing in the country. Through its Regularization Plan and Special Law 169-14, the Dominican government identified a group of approximately 55,000 individuals who should receive full restoration of citizenship rights, as well as an additional group of 8,700 persons who may be eligible for appropriate documentation. While authorities have proposed a fair solution for both of these groups, the fate of the rest of individuals documented to have been born in the country remains uncertain.

In this context, we respectfully ask that you work with the Dominican government to ensure that the process is timely, efficient, and inclusive of everyone who was born in the country. It is imperative that all individuals documented in the national survey and their children are provided a solution that guarantees their right to live in the only country they have known since their birth. It is equally important that vulnerable populations receive appropriate protections so that they can fully access their rights as citizens.

Additionally, it is important to note that more than 36,000 individuals of Haitian descent voluntarily have left the Dominican Republic during the past months. This action has overwhelmed Haitian authorities, who are not prepared to attend to such numbers. We are concerned that as individuals are coming across the border, they are not being afforded appropriate screening and reintegration assistance.

In closing, we encourage you to continue your support for joint cooperation between the United States, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti so that all cases are handled in a manner that is fair, transparent, and consistent with international standards.



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator

Sincerely,



BILL NELSON
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown

SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren

ELIZABETH WARREN
United States Senator

Chris Coons

CHRISTOPHER COONS
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey

EDWARD J. MARKEY
United States Senator

Patrick Leahy

PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator