

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our strong opposition to the resumption of non-criminal deportations to Haiti and to urge you to reconsider this decision. Conditions in Haiti have not sufficiently improved to warrant this change in policy.

As you are aware, Haiti has yet to recover from the catastrophic 2010 earthquake that shook the nation to its core. Within seconds, the earthquake claimed more than 200,000 lives, displaced millions of people, destroyed more than 300,000 buildings, and shrank the Western Hemisphere's poorest economy by 5.1 percent. Today, Haiti still struggles to rebuild.

Nearly seven years later, Haiti's recovery, beset by political upheaval, cholera, environmental degradation, and other challenges, can be described as dismal at best. Tens of thousands of Haitians continue to live in makeshift tents, much of the nation's infrastructure lies in ruin, the unemployment rate is still over 40 percent, 60 percent of Haitians live under the national poverty line of \$2.42 per day, and Haiti's economy has slowed to an anemic 0.8 percent growth rate. Furthermore, Haiti is still dealing with the cholera epidemic that has killed over 10,000 people and sickened hundreds of thousands of others.

This week, conditions deteriorated to levels not seen since the 2010 earthquake after Hurricane Matthew pummeled the nation. The first category four hurricane to hit Haiti in 52 years, Matthew hammered the nation with 145-mile-per-hour winds and intense rains. Early reports indicate that the hurricane has affected more than 350,000 Haitians, destroyed homes, roads, and bridges, and resulted in many deaths. Mourad Wahba, the top United Nations official in Haiti, described the aftermath as "the largest humanitarian event" since the earthquake. The decision to resume non-criminal deportations to Haiti will further exacerbate the nation's chaotic situation.

It comes just days before long-delayed presidential elections are scheduled to begin. For nearly a year, Haiti has been without a democratically elected leader and a functioning government. This has hampered its recovery and proven costly for many Haitians. For example, an impasse between the legislature and interim President Jocelerme Privert over his expired mandate prolonged a doctors' strike and was partly blamed for many deaths that occurred outside the gates of unstaffed hospitals. Furthermore, the decision undermines Haiti's efforts to transition from a caretaker government to a democratically elected government.

As members of Congress, we understand and share your commitment to enforcing our nation's immigration laws. However, we believe this can be done in a more humane manner. Given Haiti's vulnerable state and lingering challenges, we respectfully request that you reconsider this decision and ensure that undocumented Haitians are provided full and fair asylum hearings, effective assistance of counsel, and information on all forms of relief. Additionally, we request that you support Haiti's efforts to hold presidential elections and expand economic opportunities for its citizens.

We respectfully request a meeting to discuss this issue and look forward to working with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



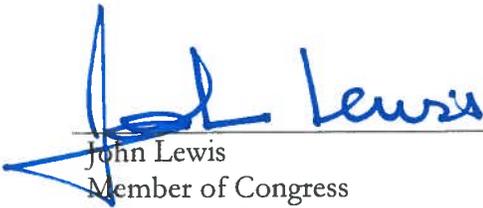
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



John Conyers
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Jim Clyburn
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress



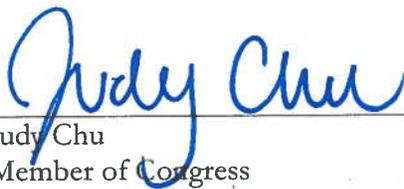
Karen Bass
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



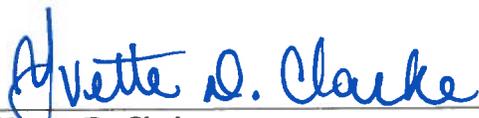
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



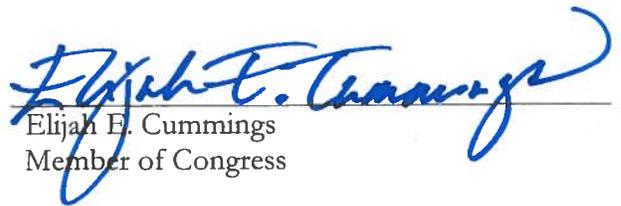
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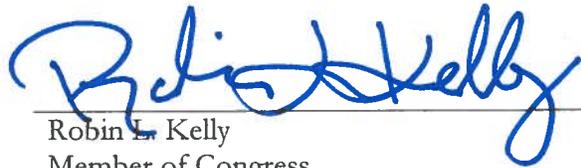
Sheila Jackson Lee
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Hakeem S. Jeffries
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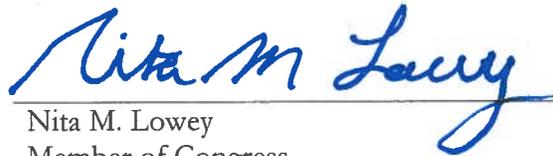
Henry C. "Fank" Johnson
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Barbara Lee
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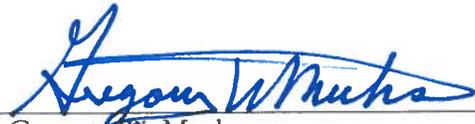
Nita M. Lowey
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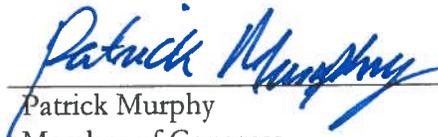
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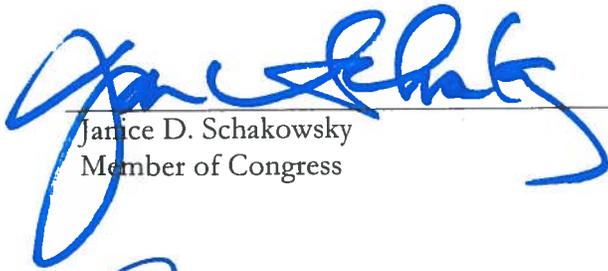
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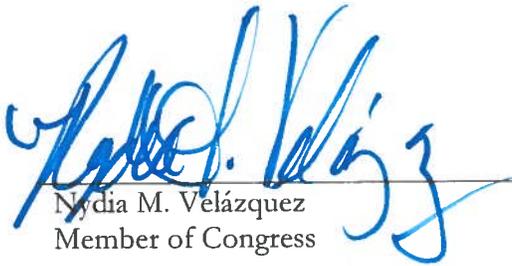
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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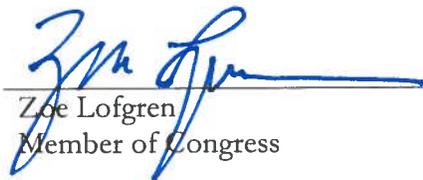
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Zoe Lofgren
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Jerrold Nadler

Jerrold Nadler
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