

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to express our deep concern for the people of Haiti during this incredibly tumultuous time. The violence, extreme poverty and political instability that has plagued Haiti over the last several years has resulted in grave trauma to the Haitian people and across the Haitian diaspora. The recent assassination of Haitian President Moïse and the resulting political vacuum it has caused has the potential to exacerbate the ongoing violence and turmoil in Haiti. As the co-chairs of the House Haiti Caucus, we stand in solidarity with the people of Haiti and our Haitian community members. It is incumbent upon the United States and the entire global community to come together in support of the people of Haiti as well as the more than one million Haitians and Americans of Haitian descent that call the United States home.

The situation in Haiti has simply become untenable. The COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed the nation's already limited public health infrastructure.¹ Gang violence and bloodshed and ongoing kidnapping of civilians have displaced thousands from their homes.² A report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs found that the unprecedented violence and displacements has led to an array of secondary challenges, such as family separation, forced school closures and increased financial insecurity.³

In response to the dire situation in Haiti, we welcomed the Biden Administration's decision to redesignate Haiti for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in late May, which provided nearly 100,000 Haitians with access to protection from deportation. However, much more needs to be done. The delay in publishing the renewed designation in the Federal Register has inhibited eligible Haitians from applying for TPS. We strongly urge you to publish the updated Haiti redesignation so that eligible Haitians may begin the process of applying for these critical protections and employ a presumption against firm resettlement for all newly eligible TPS applicants from Haiti, including those previously deemed firmly resettled by an immigration judge. For any TPS applicant who may ultimately be denied TPS due solely to firm resettlement, we strongly urge DHS to utilize its administrative authority to grant Deferred Enforced Departure or any other form of deferred action.

¹ *Washington Post (Washington, D.C.: 1974)*. 2021. "Twin Epidemics in Haiti, Violence and Coronavirus, Usher in 'Critical Phase' in Wake of Assassination," July 8, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/07/08/haiti-health-crisis/>.

² *Ibid.*

³ "Haiti: Displacement in Port-Au-Prince Situation Report No. 1 - as of 8 June 2021 - Haiti." n.d. Relief web. Int. Accessed July 9, 2021. <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/haiti-displacement-port-au-prince-situation-report-no-1-8-june-2021>.

Additionally, the lapse of the Haitian Family Reunification Parole (HFRP) Program has been a significant barrier for Haitians. This program would allow for certain eligible U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to apply for parole for their family members in Haiti who cannot be reunited because of a years-long backlog in visa processing. Due to the ongoing turmoil in Haiti, this program is absolutely crucial in reuniting families and keeping loved ones safe. We strongly call on the Administration to reinstate this program.

Furthermore, in the midst of this turmoil, DHS must finally halt all deportations of Haitian migrants amid this political crisis and the continued spread of COVID-19. Since the start of the Biden Administration, more than 2,000 Haitian migrants⁴ have been deported. Specifically, the Biden Administration's continued use of the Trump era "Title 42" policy has resulted in unjust removals and expulsions of Haitian asylum seekers. This is both unconscionable, inhumane and unjust. The Administration must halt the ongoing use of Title 42, discontinue any further deportations and work to establish a mechanism to support Haitians who were unjustly deported.

These necessary actions are rooted in the calls of the Haitian communities we are proud to represent across our Congressional Districts. As an ally to Haiti and the Haitian people, the United States must immediately advance domestic policy that protects the Haitian diaspora and supports the stabilization of Haitian democracy.

We stand ready to partner with you to actualize these necessary reforms and ensure the voices of Haitians in the United States and in Haiti are heard.


Sincerely,



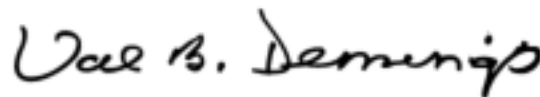
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Andy Levin
Member of Congress



Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress



Val Demings
Member of Congress

⁴ Borger, Julian. 2021. "Haiti Deportations Soar as Biden Administration Deploys Trump-Era Health Order." *The Guardian*, March 25, 2021. <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/mar/25/haiti-deportations-soar-as-biden-administration-deploys-trump-era-health-order>.