

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2024

## VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

The Honorable Jason Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways and Means  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neal:

We are writing to express our support for the prompt renewal of the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) and the Haiti Economic Lift Program (HELP) Acts, commonly known as HOPE/HELP. The apparel sector is the backbone of Haiti's economy and the foundation for the country's economic development. With cascading job losses and an extreme security crisis, Haiti cannot afford to wait any longer for the reauthorization of this vital program. Companies will increasingly shift production away from Haiti unless it is clear that HOPE/HELP will continue for an additional ten years.

HOPE/HELP is linked to both the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) and the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA).<sup>1</sup> The program allows duty-free access for certain apparel and textile products from Haiti to the U.S. market.<sup>2</sup> When the HOPE bill was first passed in 2006, there were about 12,500 workers in Haiti's garment sector.<sup>3</sup> As a result of HOPE/HELP, employment in the garment sector reached a peak of almost 60,000 workers in 2022.<sup>4</sup> Further, apparel exports have grown to over \$1 billion, representing over 80% of Haiti's total exports.<sup>5</sup>

Haiti has been experiencing a windfall of devastating and interrelated crises – not only with security, but also humanitarian, political, and economic as well. Haitians are resilient and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Fifteenth Report to Congress on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act*, UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, (December, 2023) <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/IssueAreas/Preference%20Programs/2023%20Caribbean%20Basin%20Economic%20Recovery%20Act%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> *International Trade Administration*, HAITI – TRADE AGREEMENTS, (August 3, 2019) <https://www.export.gov/apex/article2?id=Haiti-Trade-Agreements#:~:text=HOPE%20II%20modified%20the%20existing,expire%20on%20September%2030%2C%202025.>

<sup>3</sup> Georges Barau Sassine, Testimony before U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Rebuilding Haiti in the Martelly Era*, (June 23, 2011), <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/publications/download/georges-barau-sassine-testimony-6-23-2011>

<sup>4</sup> *2023 USTR Annual Report on the Implementation of the Technical Assistance Improvement and Compliance Needs Assessment and Remediation (TAICNAR) Program and Assessment of Producer Eligibility*, UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, (June 16, 2023)

<sup>5</sup> *Fifteenth Report to Congress on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act*, UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, (December, 2023)

country has been able to weather numerous crises over its history, but we are at a particularly perilous point now.

HOPE/HELP is due to expire in September 2025<sup>6</sup>, a little over year from now. This creates uncertainty for buyers and investors who need much more time to make sourcing decisions. Immediate reauthorization of the program is critical to restore confidence and stem these job losses.

While the security crisis has justifiably received the most attention, Haiti's friends and allies in Congress recognize the essential importance of maintaining Haiti's formal economy. Immediate reauthorization of HOPE/HELP ranks as one of the top policy priorities that the United States can do to help Haiti at this moment in time.

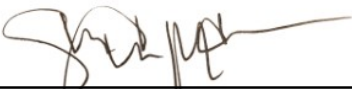
HOPE/HELP is a trade preference program that boosts development for our allies. HOPE/HELP has strong bipartisan support, and no domestic opposition. Haiti is an ally, one of the few countries in the Hemisphere that still recognizes Taiwan, and U.S. support for Haiti's apparel sector is mutually beneficial. Haitian apparel utilizes U.S. cotton and can play an essential role in further shifting supply chains out of China and to the Western Hemisphere.


Prioritizing HOPE/HELP reauthorization reaffirms the United States' dedication to fostering sustainable economic growth in Haiti and supporting the livelihoods of thousands employed in the garment sector.


We therefore request that HOPE/HELP be reauthorized as soon as possible. Reauthorization should be done in a way that is thoughtful and responsive to the needs of both workers and businesses.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

<sup>6</sup> *International Trade Administration*, TRADE PREFERENCE PROGRAMS FOR HAITIAN TEXTILES AND APPAREL, <https://www.trade.gov/haiti-trade-preference> (Last Visited February 1, 2024).



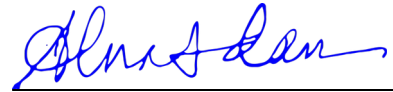
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



María Elvira Salazar  
Member of Congress




Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress



André Carson  
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



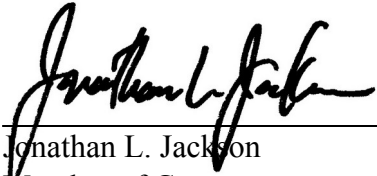
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress



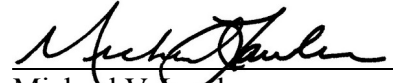
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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



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Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



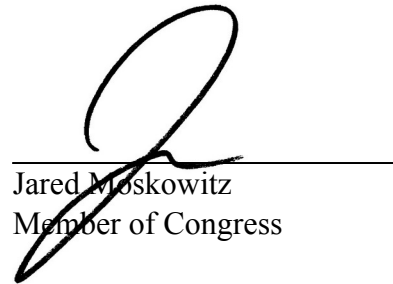
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Michael V. Lawler  
Member of Congress



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Mario Diaz-Balart  
Member of Congress



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Jared Moskowitz  
Member of Congress



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Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress