



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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ACTION ALERT

DATE: March 19, 2009
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau

NAACP Urges President Obama to Grant Temporary Safe Haven to Haitian Refugees Already In The U.S.

THE ISSUE:

Temporary protected status (TPS) grants temporary protection from deportation to nationals of a country in which environmental or political events have occurred which make it temporarily unsafe to deport them or when armed conflict poses a serious threat to public safety. TPS has been granted to nationals of many countries including those of Nicaragua and Honduras in 1999 following Hurricane Mitch, and of El Salvador in 2001 following severe earthquakes.

Recent devastating environmental disasters from which Haiti has not recovered, continuing violence, and unstable political conditions pose a serious threat at this time to the personal safety of anyone forcibly repatriated to Haiti. Last year's storms and hurricanes killed hundreds and rendered hundreds of thousands homeless. Fifteen percent of Haiti's already fragile economy was destroyed, the equivalent of eight to ten Hurricane Katrinas hitting the United States in the same month. Haitian deportees face hunger, homelessness, and grave threats to their security. The Haitian government's ability to provide basic governmental services--clean water, education, passable road and basic healthcare--has been severely compromised by the natural disasters and food crisis in 2008. Repatriating Haitians exposes them to these dangerous conditions, while imposing an additional burden on government resources that are already stretched too thin.

Furthermore, granting TPS to Haitian refugees would help Haiti recover, as Haitians in the United States could obtain work permits and would increase the already significant flow of remittances to their family and friends back home. Haitians who receive that aid are more likely to stay and rebuild Haiti. Many depend on those remittances for their very survival. That flow of dollars is among the best foreign aid that the United States can provide, and it costs taxpayers nothing. Strengthening Haiti's economy will be the only sure way to ensure that more Haitians will not risk their lives on a perilous oversea journey to the United States. Granting Haitians TPS would also directly assist Haiti's nascent democracy in its efforts to recover from these conditions, stabilize the country's economy, rebuild its political and economic institutions, and provide a future of hope for Haiti's people. TPS would be extended only to those Haitians currently residing in the United States, so any concerns about a mass exodus to the US are unfounded.

Haiti is the hemispheres oldest democracy, and has always had a special relationship to the United States. Haitian immigrants have long contributed to America's diverse and vibrant culture. The current plight of Haitians in their homeland clearly qualifies them for TPS here in the United States, and thus the NAACP strongly urges President Obama to grant TPS to Haitian refugees. Furthermore, the NAACP strongly supports legislation introduced by Congressman Alcee Hastings (FL) to grant TPS to Haitians (H.R. 144).

[More...](#)

THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:

Contact President Obama and **URGE HIM TO SUPPORT IMMEDIATELY GRANTING TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) TO HAITIAN REFUGEES.** To contact the President you may:

✓ **Make a Phone Call:**

Call your Senators and your Representative in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators'/Congressman's offices. The switchboard phone number is **(202) 456-1414** (see message section, below).

✓ **Write a Letter**

To write a letter to the President, send it to:
President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

**A SAMPLE
LETTER IS
ATTACHED**

✓ **Send a Fax**

If you would like to send a fax, the White House fax number is 202-456-2461 (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ **Send an E-Mail**

To send an e-mail to the President, go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/> and fill in the requested fields. You may use the text of the sample letter below to fill in the message section.

THE MESSAGE

- Recent devastating environmental disasters from which Haiti has not recovered, continuing violence, and unstable political conditions pose a serious threat at this time to the personal safety of anyone forcibly repatriated to Haiti.
- Repatriating Haitians exposes them to dangerous conditions, while imposing an additional burden on government resources that are already stretched too thin.
- Temporary Protected Status, if extended to Haitians given the dire situation they would face if deported, is only given to those already in the United States, so any concerns about a mass exodus to the US are unfounded.
- The current plight of Haitians in their homeland clearly qualifies them for TPS here in the United States, and thus the NAACP strongly urges President Obama to grant TPS to Haitian immigrants who are already in the United States.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

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To become an NAACP member or to sign up for e-mail legislative and press updates, visit www.naacp.org

Sample Letter

(date)

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

RE: URGE GRANTING TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS TO HAITIAN REFUGEES LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear President Obama:

I am writing to express my support for granting temporary protected status to Haitian immigrants and refugees living in the United States. I am encouraged by your Administration's leadership on this issue and your willingness to consider taking this important step toward addressing the very real human needs of the Haitian community in America.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) can be granted when a foreign state cannot handle the return of its nationals due to an environmental disaster, or when armed conflict poses a serious threat to public safety. Last year's storms and hurricanes killed hundreds and rendered hundreds of thousands homeless. Fifteen percent of Haiti's already fragile economy was destroyed, the equivalent of eight to ten Hurricane Katrinas hitting the United States in the same month. Haitian deportees face hunger, homelessness, and grave threats to their security. Furthermore, TPS would be extended only to those Haitians currently residing in the United States, so any concerns about a mass exodus to the US are unfounded.

Furthermore, granting TPS to Haitian refugees would help Haiti recover, as Haitians in the United States could obtain work permits and would increase the already significant flow of remittances to their family and friends back home. Haitians who receive that aid are more likely to stay and rebuild Haiti. Many depend on those remittances for their very survival. That flow of dollars is among the best foreign aid that the United States can provide, and it costs taxpayers nothing. Strengthening Haiti's economy will be the only sure way to ensure that more Haitians will not risk their lives on a perilous overseas journey to the United States. Granting Haitians TPS would also directly assist Haiti's nascent democracy in its efforts to recover from these conditions, stabilize the country's economy, rebuild its political and economic institutions, and provide a future of hope for Haiti's people.

Haiti is the world's oldest Democracy, and has always had a special relationship to the United States. Haitian immigrants have long contributed to America's diverse and vibrant culture. The issue of Haitian TPS matters deeply to a broad coalition of constituencies, immigrant and citizen alike.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

(Print and sign your name)