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kendrickmeek.house.gov



CONGRESSMAN KENDRICK B. MEEK

February 3, 2006

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

I write to bring your attention to the enclosed news story from Miami's WFOR-CBS, Channel 4, by reporter Jennifer Santiago. The story concerns a group of Haitians who have been deported or are facing deportation from the United States because of an omission in the Haitian Refugee Immigrant Fairness Act.

In 1998, following precedent set by the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), Congress passed the Haitian Refugee Immigrant Fairness Act (HRIFA), which was supposed to provide the same benefits to Haitians that were provided to Nicaraguans. HRIFA granted eligibility for permanent residence to certain Haitian nationals who fled the repressive, military regime that subjugated them from 1991 - 1994. Since that time, almost 20,000 Haitians have successfully adjusted their residency status. However, due to omissions in the original legislation, nearly 3,000 otherwise eligible Haitians now face deportation.

Unlike Nicaraguans, a number of Haitians left their country by air and were forced to employ fraudulent documents to protect their lives and escape to the safety of the United States. However, once in the US, our laws require their expatriation. It makes little sense to expel these Haitians because they were unable to obtain proper travel documents from the very same murderous regime they were attempting to escape.

In addition, due to inordinately long processing times at the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services, many Haitian children's applications were nullified when they turned 21, commonly referred to as "aging out." These young adults now have little recourse and they too face deportation.

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For these reasons, I urge your support of the HRIFA Improvement Act, H.R. 3658, which I introduced in Congress to correct these omissions. I understand you plan to pursue comprehensive immigration reform legislation in the coming months, and I request that you include my legislation in the proposal you submit to Congress.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kendrick B. MEEK". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

KENDRICK B. MEEK
Member of Congress

Enclosures