

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 15, 2011

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We thank you and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano for redesignating Haiti for Temporary Protected Status last May. Additionally, we write to urge you to create a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program (FRPP) to save lives, reunite families, and stimulate recovery by generating additional remittances into the indefinite future to help thousands in Haiti.

To serve these ends, DHS should start promptly paroling some of the beneficiaries of family-based visa petitions who despite DHS approvals remain on a 3 to 10 year wait list in Haiti. Many may not survive, including those in preference category 2A (minor children and spouses of lawful permanent residents) and/or those with earlier approval dates. It makes sense to begin such paroles with the most vulnerable and deserving of those DHS has approved, but whose lives remain at risk in post-quake Haiti.

As you know, the United States has paroled hundreds of thousands of Cuban, Indochinese, and Kosovar refugees over the years, and of direct precedent, DHS recently renewed the Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program (FRPP). Through this program, over 30,000 approved beneficiaries have been paroled into the United States since 2009. Given conditions in Haiti, a similar Haitian program is urgently needed.

There is broad support. On September 22nd, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick wrote Secretary Napolitano, urging DHS to promptly parole the beneficiaries of approved Haitian family-based visa petitions to “mirror” the Cuban FRPP and help Haiti recover by generating remittances. In addition, some of our colleagues from the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation sent a bipartisan, bicameral letter to Secretary Napolitano urging the same thing. Their letters joined a chorus of major editorial boards, city and mayoral resolutions, letters from political leaders and June’s Center for Global Development working paper.

As noted in the paper “Migration as a Tool for Disaster Recover: A Case Study on U.S. Policy Options for Post-Earthquake Haiti,” Center for Global Development, June 2011, at 15-16:

- Rather than waiting years for a visa in Haiti, beneficiaries could be paroled into the United States where they can be reunited with family and have employment authorization.
- The proposal has merit not only for the humanitarian purpose it would served, but also to enable Haitians to send more remittances home and foster economic development in Haiti with greater speed.

- Instituting a family reunification parole program for Haitians is simpler than it may appear, as the Executive Branch has the authority to establish such programs without congressional action.
- The Haitian program would save lives by helping to prevent people from migrating by sea, providing for orderly migration to the U.S.
- No one would get a green card any sooner -- like the Cubans, they would be able to wait for their green card in the U.S. with their families rather than in Haiti.

Mr. President, we appreciate your leadership and commitment to help Haiti recover from this natural catastrophe. Again we urge you and Secretary Napolitano to promptly implement a Haitian FRPP -- or alternatively start expeditiously paroling the most vulnerable and deserving subgroups -- to save lives, reunite families, grant equal treatment with those similarly situated, and most importantly provide an important boost to the recovery of Haiti, still struggling to recover.

Sincerely,

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate

Richard J. Durbin

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate

Ben Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senate

Karen Bass

Karen Bass
U.S. House of Representatives

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives

Robert A. Brady

Robert A. Brady
U.S. House of Representatives

Yvette D. Clarke

Yvette D. Clarke
U.S. House of Representatives

John F. Kerry

John F. Kerry
United States Senate

Gary L. Ackerman

Gary Ackerman
U.S. House of Representatives

Howard L. Berman

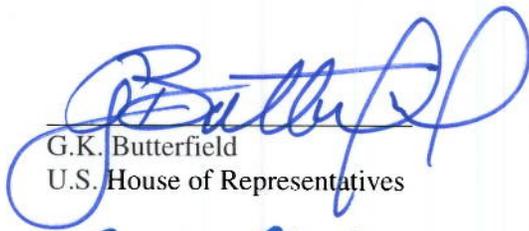
Howard L. Berman
U.S. House of Representatives

Earl Blumenauer

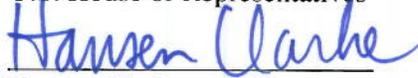
Earl Blumenauer
U.S. House of Representatives

Corrine Brown

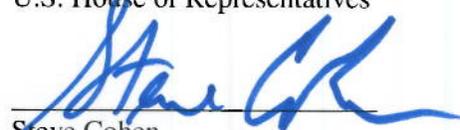
Corrine Brown
U.S. House of Representatives

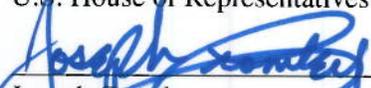

G.K. Butterfield
U.S. House of Representatives


Steve Chabot
U.S. House of Representatives

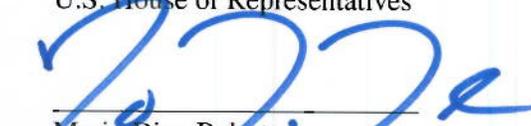

Hansen Clarke
U.S. House of Representatives

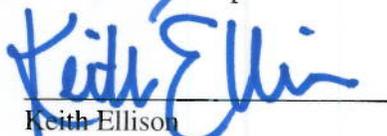

Emanuel Cleaver, II
U.S. House of Representatives

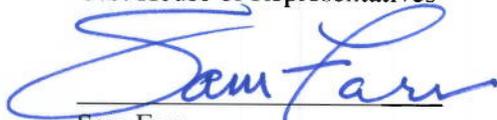

Steve Cohen
U.S. House of Representatives

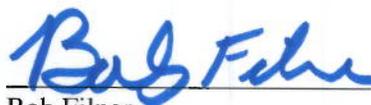

Joseph Crowley
U.S. House of Representatives


Danny K. Davis
U.S. House of Representatives

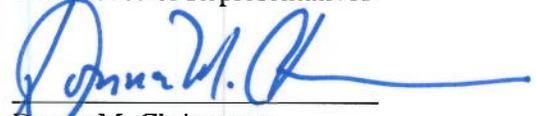

Mario Diaz-Balart
U.S. House of Representatives

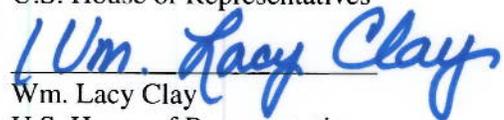

Keith Ellison
U.S. House of Representatives

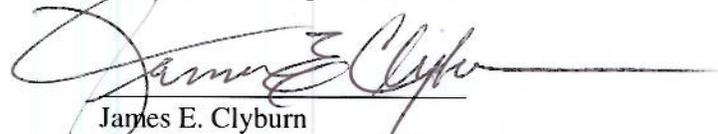

Sam Farr
U.S. House of Representatives

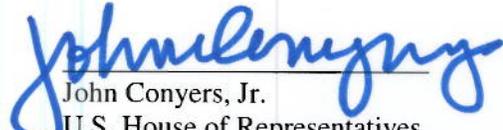

Bob Filner
U.S. House of Representatives

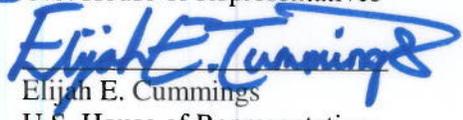

André Carson
U.S. House of Representatives

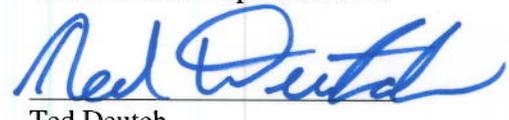

Donna M. Christensen
U.S. House of Representatives


Wm. Lacy Clay
U.S. House of Representatives


James E. Clyburn
U.S. House of Representatives

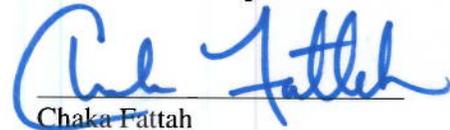

John Conyers, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives

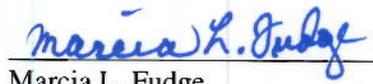

Elijah E. Cummings
U.S. House of Representatives

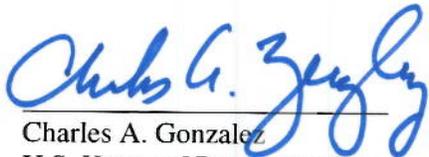

Ted Deutch
U.S. House of Representatives


Donna F. Edwards M.C.
U.S. House of Representatives

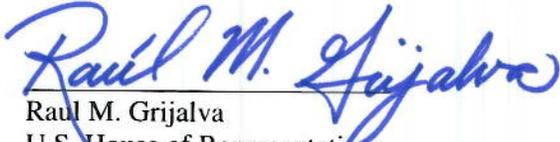

Eliot L. Engel
U.S. House of Representatives


Chaka Fattah
U.S. House of Representatives

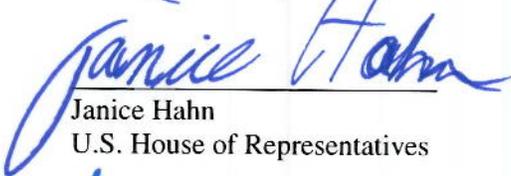

Marcia L. Fudge
U.S. House of Representatives



Charles A. Gonzalez
U.S. House of Representatives



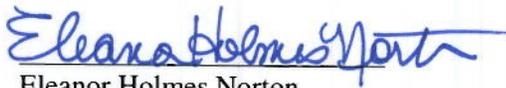
Raul M. Grijalva
U.S. House of Representatives



Janice Hahn
U.S. House of Representatives



Maurice Hinchey
U.S. House of Representatives



Eleanor Holmes Norton
U.S. House of Representatives



Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives



Eddie Bernice Johnson
U.S. House of Representatives



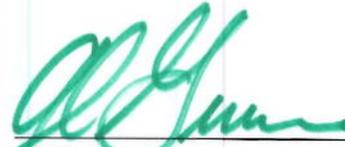
Barbara Lee
U.S. House of Representatives



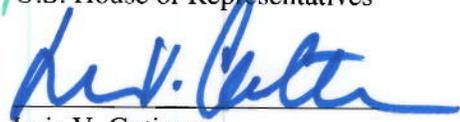
Steve Israel
U.S. House of Representatives



Zoe Lofgren
U.S. House of Representatives



Al Green
U.S. House of Representatives



Luis V. Gutierrez
U.S. House of Representatives



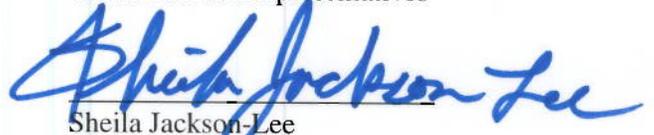
Alcee L. Hastings
U.S. House of Representatives



Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. House of Representatives



Mike Honda
U.S. House of Representatives



Sheila Jackson-Lee
U.S. House of Representatives



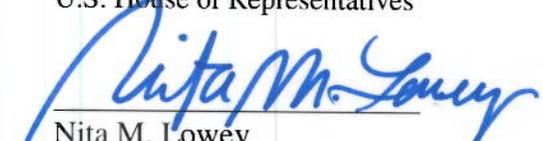
Hank Johnson
U.S. House of Representatives



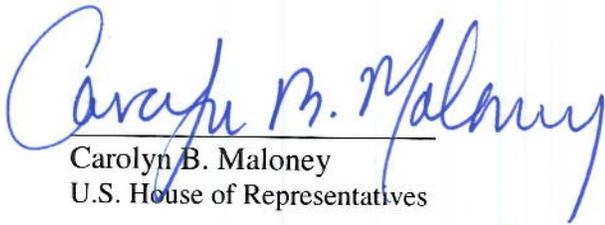
William R. Keating
U.S. House of Representatives

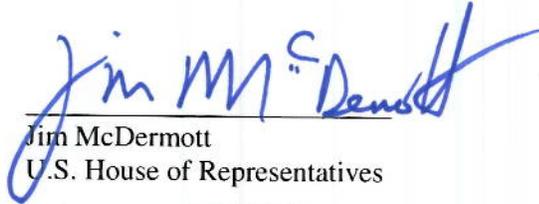


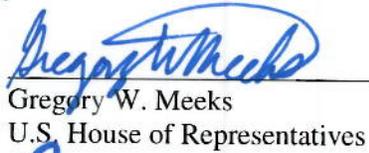
John Lewis
U.S. House of Representatives

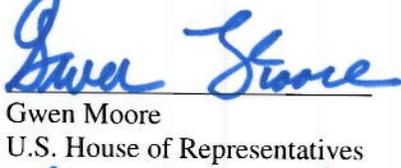


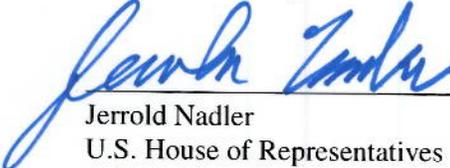
Nita M. Lowey
U.S. House of Representatives

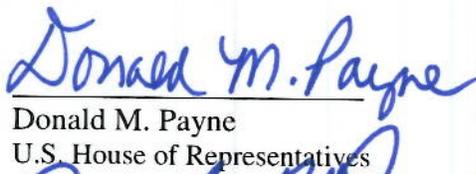

Carolyn B. Maloney
U.S. House of Representatives


Jim McDermott
U.S. House of Representatives

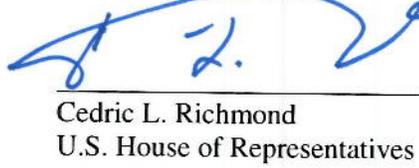

Gregory W. Meeks
U.S. House of Representatives

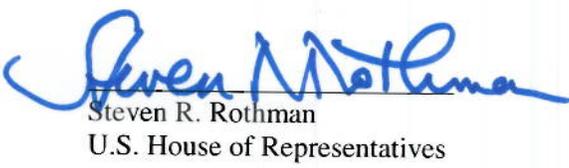

Gwen Moore
U.S. House of Representatives

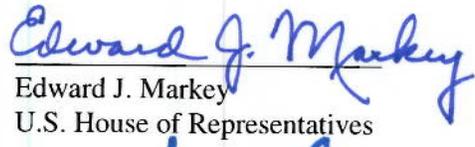

Jerrold Nadler
U.S. House of Representatives

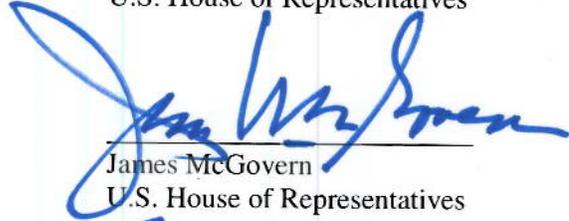

Donald M. Payne
U.S. House of Representatives

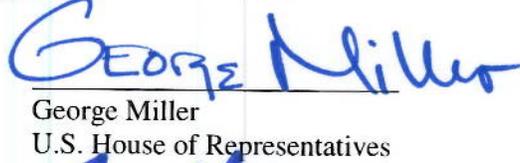

Charles B. Rangel
U.S. House of Representatives

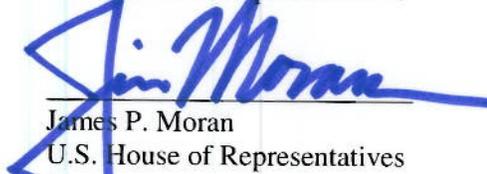

Cedric L. Richmond
U.S. House of Representatives

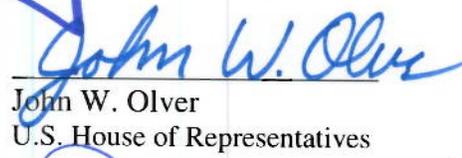

Steven R. Rothman
U.S. House of Representatives

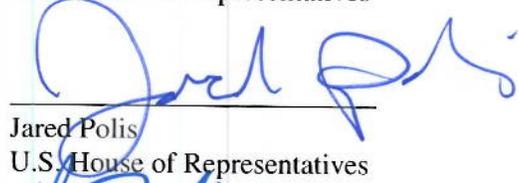

Edward J. Markey
U.S. House of Representatives

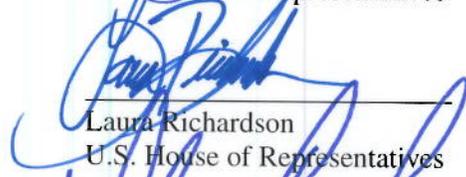

James McGovern
U.S. House of Representatives

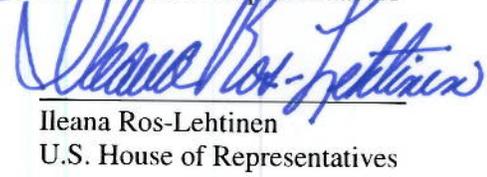

George Miller
U.S. House of Representatives

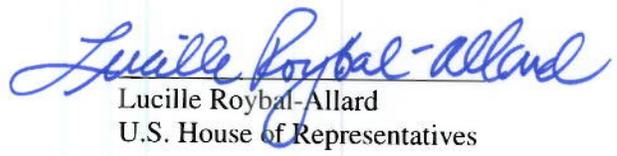

James P. Moran
U.S. House of Representatives


John W. Olver
U.S. House of Representatives


Jared Polis
U.S. House of Representatives


Laura Richardson
U.S. House of Representatives


Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
U.S. House of Representatives


Lucille Roybal-Allard
U.S. House of Representatives

Bobby L. Rush
Bobby L. Rush
U.S. House of Representatives

Jean Schmidt
Jean Schmidt
U.S. House of Representatives

David Scott
David Scott
U.S. House of Representatives

Albio Sires
Albio Sires
U.S. House of Representatives

Bennie G. Thompson
Bennie G. Thompson
U.S. House of Representatives

Nydia Velázquez
Nydia Velázquez
U.S. House of Representatives

Maxine Waters
Maxine Waters
U.S. House of Representatives

Frederica S. Wilson
Frederica S. Wilson
U.S. House of Representatives

Jan Schakowsky
Jan Schakowsky
U.S. House of Representatives

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
U.S. House of Representatives

Jose E. Serrano
Jose E. Serrano
U.S. House of Representatives

Fortney "Pete" Stark
Fortney "Pete" Stark
U.S. House of Representatives

Edolphus "Ed" Towns
Edolphus "Ed" Towns
U.S. House of Representatives

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
U.S. House of Representatives

Melvin L. Watt
Melvin L. Watt
U.S. House of Representatives

CC: Janet Napolitano, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security