



Legislation Text

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File #: Res 1096-2011, Version: A

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Res. No. 1096-A

Resolution calling upon the Department of Homeland Security to create a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program, which would benefit Haitians recovering from the January 12, 2010 earthquake by allowing Haitians with approved family-sponsored immigrant visa petitions to come to the United States.

By Council Members Eugene, Dromm, Brewer, Dickens, Fidler, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Lander, Mendez, Palma, Recchia, Rose, Seabrook, Vann, Williams, Rodriguez, Mark-Viverito, Barron, Mealy, Jackson, Gennaro and Reyna

Whereas, New York City is home to the largest Haitian population in the nation; and

Whereas, On January 12, 2010, Haiti was struck by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that killed approximately 250,000 people, left more than one million people homeless and injured, and left the nation with limited access to potable water and food; and

Whereas, Haitians living in New York City were devastated by the news of the January 12, 2010 earthquake and extremely concerned for the well-being of their family members still living in Haiti; and

Whereas, On January 21, 2010, President Barack Obama issued an executive order to grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to eligible nationals of Haiti, and on May 17, 2011, Janet Napolitano, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), announced the extension of TPS for eligible Haitians for an additional 18 months; and

Whereas, At the end of 2010, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approved 105,193 Haitians' petitions for TPS; and

Whereas, In response to the mere fraction of those Haitians who are in need and who are being helped by TPS, immigrant and human rights advocates have called upon DHS to utilize the Immigration and Nationality Act's humanitarian parole authority in order to allow Haitians with approved visas to immigrate to

the United States without having to wait up to 11 years; and

Whereas, According to the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the following categories of immigrant visa applicants from Haiti are on the waiting list as of November 2010: 15,584 unmarried sons and daughters of United States citizens; 16,216 spouses and children of permanent residents; 26,238 unmarried sons and daughters (21 years of age or older) of permanent residents; an unspecified number of married sons and daughters of United States citizens; and 37,244 brothers and sisters of adult United States citizens; and

Whereas, USCIS-approved family-based visa petition beneficiaries already have a family support system in place, making it less likely that they would require or avail themselves of public benefits; and

Whereas, The creation of a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program would permit Haitian beneficiaries of approved family-based immigrant petitions to wait in the United States, rather than in Haiti, for their visa priority dates to become current; and

Whereas, The purpose of the Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program would be to hasten family reunification and to discourage Haitian nationals from resorting to illegal and dangerous means of migration into the United States; and

Whereas, Broad support exists for the creation of a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program, including a May 5, 2011 resolution passed by the Council of the City of Philadelphia; a June 14, 2010 resolution passed unanimously by the U.S. Conference of Mayors; a letter to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano from the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs Chairman and seven other House members; and a letter to President Barack Obama from six U.S. Senators, including New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand; and

Whereas, DHS has the authority to promptly create and implement a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Department of Homeland Security to create a Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program, which would benefit Haitians recovering from the January 12, 2010 earthquake by allowing Haitians with approved family-sponsored immigrant visa petitions to

come to the United States.

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