



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0097-2010, **Version:** *

Res. No. 97

Resolution calling on Congress to pass and President Obama to sign the Haitian Emergency Life Protection Act of 2010, also known as the H.E.L.P. Act, to temporarily expand the V nonimmigrant visa category to include Haitians whose petitions for family-sponsored immigrant visas were approved on or before January 12, 2010.

By Council Members Eugene, Brewer, Dickens, Jackson, Koppell, Mark-Viverito, Palma, Williams, Rodriguez, Nelson and Dromm

Whereas, on January 12, 2010, Haiti experienced a 7.0 magnitude earthquake, the worst that the country had experienced in more than 200 years; and

Whereas, The earthquake killed more than 230,000 people, injured more than 300,000 people, and left more than one million people homeless; and

Whereas, As a result of the earthquake, more than one million children are orphaned or are left with only one parent; and

Whereas, Schools, hospitals, government buildings and prisons in Port-au-Prince and the surrounding areas have been destroyed causing the breakdown of daily life in Haiti, including the processing of Haitian Visa applications to the United States; and

Whereas, The Legal Immigration Family Equity Act (LIFE Act), signed into law by President Clinton on December 21, 2000, established several immigration benefits that encouraged family reunification, including the V nonimmigrant visa status; and

Whereas, The V nonimmigrant visa was created so that spouses and unmarried children, under the age of 21, of lawful permanent residents could reside and work in the United States while waiting to obtain legal immigration status; and

Whereas, In response to the crisis in Haiti, The Haitian Emergency Life Protection Act of 2010, or the

H.E.L.P. Act (S.2998/H.R.4616) was introduced in the Senate by Senators Kristin Gillibrand (D/NY) and Robert Menendez (D/NJ) and in the House of Representatives by Representative Yvette Clarke (D/NY) in February 2010; and

Whereas, The H.E.L.P. Act would temporarily expand the V nonimmigrant visa status to include Haitians whose completed petitions for family sponsored immigrant visas were approved on or before January 12, 2010; and

Whereas, The H.E.L.P. Act would increase federal funds that go towards processing V nonimmigrant visa applications; and

Whereas, If enacted, the H.E.L.P. Act would give an estimated 55,000 Haitians, currently living outside of the United States, but with approved immigration petitions, the opportunity to join their relatives in the United States while their immigration petitions are processed; and

Whereas, Under the H.E.L.P. Act, those who would be allowed to come to the United States would also be permitted to apply for work in order to send money back to Haiti; and

Whereas, New York City has the second largest Haitian population in the United States; and

Whereas, Haitians living throughout the United States, including New York City, contribute to the rebuilding of Haiti by sending money and supplies to relatives and friends still living in Haiti; and

Whereas, The United States has committed itself to the rebuilding of Haiti, and if enacted, this legislation would aid in these rebuilding efforts; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on Congress to pass and President Obama to sign the Haitian Emergency Life Protection Act of 2010, also known as the H.E.L.P. Act, to temporarily expand the V nonimmigrant visa category to include Haitians whose petitions for family-sponsored immigrant visas were approved on or before January 12, 2010.

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