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Randi Weingarten
American Federation of Teachers
John C. Yang
Asian Americans Advancing Justice |
AAJC

Interim President & CEO
Wade Henderson

September 24, 2021

The President

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the undersigned organizations, we write to urge you to immediately pause the removal of Haitians to Haiti and uphold basic due process and human rights for Haitians seeking asylum at the U.S. border. We also call upon your administration to investigate the treatment of migrants and conditions near the Del Rio, Texas port of entry.

In May, your administration acknowledged the dangers of Haitians returning to Haiti by the granting of Temporary Protective Status (TPS). Since that time, the political and economic conditions in Haiti have significantly deteriorated with the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse and the earthquake in August that killed more than 2,200 people. Unfortunately, these horrific events follow a long history of discriminatory U.S. policies and laws against Haitian asylum seekers and migrants.

For example, in 1978, the then Immigration and Naturalization Service established [a program](#) to “expel Haitian asylum applicants as rapidly as possible,” removing over 4,000 Haitians. Once forcibly returned many to Haiti, many were imprisoned, persecuted, and killed. From 1981 to 1991, the United States interdicted approximately 25,000 Haitians at sea and returned many to danger in Haiti without screening them for asylum. Others were wrongfully held at Guantánamo Bay and interviewed without access to legal representation. In 1997, Congress enacted the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), to provide a pathway for Nicaraguans and Cubans to become legal permanent residents after they had been unjustly denied access to the US asylum process, but Congress intentionally excluded Haitian asylum seekers from this legislation due to concerns that including Haitians would [defeat the bill](#).

In 2018, the Trump administration abruptly and without justification removed Haiti from the list of nations whose citizens may participate in the H-2A and H2B visa programs, excluding Haitians from entering the United States for temporary work. A year later, the Trump administration also discontinued the Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program (HFRP), a program the Obama administration had implemented in 2014 to allow U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to apply for parole for family members in Haiti.

Given the historic and systemic unjust treatment of Haitians, we urge you to break the cycle of discriminatory U.S. policies and laws, and we urge you to exercise prosecutorial discretion by ordering a temporary pause on the removal of Haitians who have arrived in the United States and to end the use of Title 42 expulsions which circumvent U.S. asylum protections. Humanitarian considerations warrant suspending removal flights to Haiti due to the ongoing political and economic turmoil and natural disasters there. If you have any questions, please contact Rob Randhava, senior counsel, at randhava@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
17 for Peace and Justice
ADL (Anti-Defamation League)
AFL-CIO
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Americans for Financial Reform
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health (CEEJH)
Center for Disability Rights
Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, California State University - San Bernardino
Center for Victims of Torture
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Code for America
Community Catalyst
Defending Rights & Dissent
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Earthjustice
Equal Justice Society
Fair Fight Action
Housing Choice Partners
Human Impact Partners
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First
Japanese American Citizens league (JAACL)
Justice for Migrant Women
Lambda Legal
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

League of Women Voters of the United States
Muslim Advocates
National Action Network
National Bar Association
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Immigration Project
National Organization for Women
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
Natural Resources Defense Council
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
People's Parity Project
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Public Citizen
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sojourners
Southern Poverty Law Center
The Daniel Initiative
The Workers Circle
UndocuBlack Network
Union for Reform Judaism
UNITED SIKHS
Voices for Progress
Voto Latino