

Breaking News!! President Obama Grants Some Haitians Family Reunification Parole

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In a bid to woo a segment of the black voters about three weeks to the 2014 Midterm election, President Obama announced that in an unspecified date early 2015, his administration will begin to implement the Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program. This will allow some Haitians that are currently waiting abroad to receive current priority dates to enter the United States on parole.

This much anticipated announcement was made almost 5 years to the earthquake that paralyzed Haiti in January 2010 leaving millions living in tents and abject poverty until now. While this announcement is a welcome development, weeks before the election, it might not be enough to save the Democrats from the looming defeat this midterm election.

For the past 5 years, Haitians have been crying for help from the United States. There has been no significant rebuilding since the earthquake and diseases like cholera and other related water borne ailments have plagued the people of Haiti. Many of these suffering Haitians have relatives in the United States who have petitioned for them.

It is estimated that Haitians have over 105,000 approved petitions on the waiting list for priority dates to become current. This family reunification program will assist some of them and help alleviate the problems by allowing those with less than 2 years on the waiting list to enter the United States through reunification parole to continue the processing of their permanent resident status. They will be issued employment authorization upon entry and allowed other privileges.

The details of implementation of this program will be released by the Department of Homeland Security hopefully before the end of the year. Once released, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will begin to contact eligible applicants on what they need to do to obtain the benefit.

According to the DHS "Starting in early 2015, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will

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begin implementation of a Haitian Family Reunification Parole (HFRP) Program to expedite family reunification for certain eligible Haitian family members of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents of the U.S. and to promote safe, legal and orderly migration from Haiti to the United States.

Under this program U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will offer certain eligible Haitian beneficiaries of already approved family-based immigrant visa petitions, who are currently in Haiti, an opportunity to come to the United States up to approximately two years before their immigrant visa priority dates become current.

“The rebuilding and development of a safe and economically strong Haiti is a priority for the United States. The Haitian Family Reunification Parole program promotes a fundamental underlying goal of our immigration system – family reunification. It also supports broader U.S. goals for Haiti’s reconstruction and development by providing the opportunity for certain eligible Haitians to safely and legally immigrate sooner to the United States,” said Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas. “The United States strongly discourages individuals in Haiti from undertaking life-threatening and illegal maritime journeys to the United States. Such individuals will not qualify for the HFRP program and if located at sea may be returned to Haiti.”

Legal authority for the HFRP program is provided under the Immigration and Nationality Act which authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to parole into the United States certain individuals, on a case-by-case basis, for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit. This is the same legal authority used to establish the Cuban Family Reunification Parole program in 2007.

USCIS is not currently accepting HFRP program applications, and potential beneficiaries should not take any action at this time. USCIS will provide full program details before the end of this calendar year and stakeholder engagements will take place shortly thereafter. In early 2015, the Department of State National Visa Center (NVC) will begin contacting certain U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents with approved petitions for Haitian family members, offer them the opportunity to apply to the program, and provide instructions on how to apply. Only individuals who receive a written notice of program eligibility from NVC will be eligible to apply.

Under the Haitian Family Reunification Parole program, Haitians authorized parole will be allowed to enter the United States and apply for work permits but will not receive permanent resident status any earlier.”

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All Haitians with approved petition currently pending with the National Visa Center should contact their attorney immediately for the review of possible eligibility.

It must be noted that, unless there is a change, not all pending or approved petitions will be qualified for the reunification parole. The Department of Homeland Security and the National Visa Center will provide itemized requirement for eligibility. No one should make travel arrangement until you are actually issued the parole.

This article is for your information only; it is not a legal advice. It is not a representation of any future outcome. If you need any immigration help or you have any question, please feel free to contact Attorney Famuyide at 718-647-6767 or send an e-mail to jfamuyide@aol.com .

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