



EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI
WASHINGTON, DC

The Ambassador

Thursday, November 4, 2021

Dear Chairman Blumenauer,

I have the honor to express my deepest gratitude for your leadership regarding the Haiti Economic Lift Program (HELP) Extension Act of 2021. The purpose of this letter is to express the urgency of passing this critical piece of legislation.

The law on Hemispheric Assistance to Haiti through the Promotion of the 2008 Economic Partnership, its American acronym (HOPE II/HELP), which expires in 2025, grants preferential treatment to imports of clothing, textile products, and certain other items from Haiti without customs fees. The HELP Act works alongside the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act and helps to extend duty-free shipping to the U.S. market, which includes around 1,500 products (making for a total of 5,000 duty-free products eligible under the Generalized Systems of Preferences (GSP). As you know COVID-19, affected all sectors of national life; however, the textile/clothing sector alone, which accounts for about 90% of Haiti's exports, has already begun to recover and still retains its potential.

According to a report published by the *Tripartite Commission for the Implementation of the HOPE Act* in Haiti, the industry provides direct employment to roughly 56,000 workers and has the potential of creating over 150,000 additional jobs. Now, the state of the industry is more desperate – demand for apparel has plummeted, and buyers that are still capable of placing orders are not willing to gamble that Congress will renew the program before its expiration.

Furthermore, HELP would play a crucial role in strengthening the supply chains for PPEs and textiles in response to COVID-19, making America less dependent on nations outside the Western Hemisphere. With the issues regarding China, Haiti hopes and expects to benefit from the near-shoring. Lastly, economic opportunities that supports Haitian exports and creates jobs for the Haitian people would reduce illegal migration to the United States.

I avail myself of this opportunity to present to you, Chairman Blumenauer, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Bocchit EDMOND

The Honorable Earl BLUMENAUER
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