

306 House Annex
Washington, D.C. 20515

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May 7, 1980

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The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know from the numerous letters and telegrams from various Black, civil rights and religious leaders, the plight of the Haitian boat people cries out for a just and moral solution.

After 8 years of discriminatory treatment by our government, it is time that Haitians receive the same recognition and concern that we have shown other refugees who have been welcomed to our shores. Our government, and particularly your Administration, has engaged in deliberate deceit about the human rights and political situation in Haiti. The deportation of hundreds, if not thousands, of Haitians back to Haiti has resulted in the imprisonment, torture and death of many Haitian refugees.

The Congressional Black Caucus feels that there is no other explanation for the treatment of Haitian refugees other than a racist determination that Black boat people are not deserving of political refugee status. Comparisons of equal treatment with Cuban refugees who started to flee to South Florida two weeks ago is not an accurate reflection of the real situation. Haitians have been seeking political asylum since 1972; equal protection under the law did not begin two weeks ago with the arrival of Cuban refugees.

We hope and expect that you will answer the Haitians' cry for justice. The only solution that will adequately address these concerns is refugee status for the Haitians by the May 15 deadline, the termination date for your legal authority to remedy this gross history of injustice. We are committed to justice and equality for Haitian refugees and we will make the case of the Haitian refugees an issue in each remaining primary and all other forums.

Failure to address this issue of basic morality would forever stain your record of leadership and your Presidential administration.

Sincerely,

/s/

CARDISS COLLINS
CBC, Chairperson