

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS President Clinton on November 19, 1997 signed the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), enabling an estimated 150,000 Nicaraguans and Cubans to become legal permanent residents of the United States; and

WHEREAS Haitians were excluded from NACARA; and

WHEREAS such exclusion was discriminatory and the latest chapter in a twenty-year history of discrimination against them by the United States government as held by federal court judges; and

WHEREAS justice and fairness for Haitians is a moral imperative, essential for social harmony and good will, requiring that Haitians be given legal permanent residence in parity with the Nicaraguans and Cubans given residence under NACARA; and

WHEREAS Senators Connie Mack (R-FL), Spencer Abraham (R-MI), Bob Graham (D-FL), Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) on November 9, 1997 have introduced the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act of 1997, S. 1504, which would enable Haitians to become legal permanent residents if they were paroled or applied for political asylum before 1996; and

WHEREAS an identical bill, H. R. 3049, has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Carrie Meek (D-FL), John Conyers (D-MI), Melvin Watt (D-NC), Alcee Hastings (D-FL), Corrine Brown (D-FL), and Maxine Waters (D-CA); and

WHEREAS Representatives Meek, Brown, and Hastings on November 12, 1997 introduced H. R. 3033, which gives full parity with those made eligible for residence by NACARA; and

WHEREAS The Senate Judiciary Committee's immigration subcommittee will vote on S. 1504 on March 10, 1998; and

WHEREAS Presidential leadership is needed and the President supports equal treatment for the Haitians; and

WHEREAS S. 1504 and H. R. 3049 should be broadened to include vulnerable non-parolee children and other deserving subgroups which are included in H. R. 3033; and

WHEREAS House Immigration Committee Chairperson Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX) opposes any legislation, inaccurately stating Haitians have been treated "better" than other immigrant groups; and

WHEREAS to the contrary there is a long history of discrimination against the Haitians as held in federal court decisions; and

WHEREAS Haitians in this country send an estimated \$400 million

to \$500 million annually to their families in Haiti, which is important for that country's welfare; and

WHEREAS democracy and the rule of law have not been fully restored in Haiti, and Amnesty International and other reports state that it may be dangerous for Haitians to return; and

WHEREAS Haitian President Rene Preval has informed President Clinton that deporting the Haitians would destabilize Haiti's extremely fragile political and economic conditions; and

WHEREAS Congress and the White House took similar foreign policy considerations into account in supporting protective legislation for Central Americans; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE:

1. vigorously endorse and support the three Haitian bills as essential to do justice to the Haitians;
2. call on President Clinton to immediately endorse and take the lead in championing them and the legal permanent residence which they provide;
3. **DECLARE that anything less than legal permanent residence for the Haitians is unacceptable; and**
4. urge all of our representatives and elected officials to co-sponsor and endorse this essential remedial legislation.