

**MINUTES of the DEC. 29 (1997) IMMIGRATION TASK FORCE MEETING
CONDUCTED BY Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek**

Congresswoman Meek:

- *Presided over the Task Force meeting to discuss national strategy for assisting all Haitians throughout the USA.
- *Requested a written mission statement and "goals and objectives" memorandum from each committee on or before January 20, 1998.
- *Asked every member of the group to write a thank-you letter to the President urging him to support legislation that would grant amnesty for all Haitians.
- *Suggested every member write a similar letter to Attorney General Reno also asking her to grant amnesty to all Haitians. Ms. Meek indicated that it's not within her purview to play an administrative role.
- *Asked group members to push their individual Senators and Congresspersons to agenda the Bill as soon as the 105 Congress reconvenes on Jan. 25, 1998.
- *Suggested that if the Task Force forms a lobbying arm, then said arm should be composed of no more than one or two individuals.
- *Agreed to assist Michael Ray obtain meeting with Hill staffers.
- *Mentioned aggressive follow-up with Senator Graham.
- *Requested Cheryl Little to give names of national organizations that will sign on in this effort and coordinate same with them -- along with informational mailings.

Rep. Kendrick Meek

- * Mentioned that there is a balance of money in the Haitian Catholic Center, available from a previous Washington, D.C. trip fundraising effort.

Steve Forester:

- * Wants the Congresswoman to ask the Attorney General to suspend all immigration proceedings. The letter should include a request that reads as follows:
 - "Dear Ms. Attorney General, please suspend all immigration proceedings at the INS, Immigration Court, and Board of Immigration Appeals."
- *Promised to fax a draft copy of the letter he thinks the Congresswoman should send to the President and Attorney General Janet Reno.

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- * Suggested further that the Congresswoman call INS District Director Wallace to discuss: 1) how he plans to implement the Washington directives, 2) the specific procedure for renewal of work authorization for Haitians, as well as 3) the end to all INS court proceedings.

Michael Ray

- * Indicated that without an Executive Order from the President, the INS' efforts to continue deportation proceedings would tie-up the courts and waste taxpayer funds.
- * Asked the Congresswoman to assist him in obtaining meetings with Washington D.C. Congressional & Presidential staffers.

Magda Theodate

- * Will detail strategy of where the Haitian Bill goes from here.

Cheryl Little

- * Mentioned that the National Immigration Forum is funded to lobby on our behalf and suggested that the Forum be utilized to the full extent possible.
- * Has a list of nationwide church groups and human rights groups that would be valuable contacts. Said listings will be given to Magda.

Peggy Demon

- * Suggested that the group decide what organizations, local and national, will be requested to get onboard, who will make the pitch, and what strategies will be used to enlist their help. etc.

Phillip Brutus

- * Wanted to know what chance Congresswoman Meek's Haitian Bill has of passing in the Congress. The Congresswoman said "it's going to be an uphill battle... and we'd need all the help we can get."

Marleine Bastien

- * Indicated a need for a "consumer alert" info to warn Haitians that it is unnecessary to pay anyone to include them in a database, should the Bill pass. She suggested that the community be made aware of these fraudulent practices being used to exploit Haitian immigrants.

- * She suggested that the Haitian community be made aware of the fact that DED exists. Any such statement should also indicate that Haitians must still go to INS court hearings, though they will not be deported at this time. She would like Miami INS to have a procedure in place for renewing work permits for Haitians. She also indicated that the Miami INS needs to receive a very clear directive from Washington, DC regarding DED for Haitians.

Gepsie Metellus

- * Stated that the press coverage has been very good lately, and would like to develop methods to continue and enhance the positive coverage.

Lavarice Gaudin (Veye-Yo)

- * Suggested that Haitian TV/Radio personalities be used to reach grassroots-level Haitians to inform them of what's going on .

Jean Herode Jean

- * Meeting adjourned with a statement from Mr. Jean explaining his emotions about being returned yesterday from Haiti, and his gratitude for all efforts on his behalf.

Immigration Task Force Committees

12/29/97

National Organizing Committee

1. Little, C. (Chair) 573-1106 x100
2. Forester, S. (Co-chair) 754-8834
3. Cyriaque, C.
4. Thompson, E.
5. Ray, M.
6. Foulkes, M.
7. Paul, C.
8. Bastiene, M.
- 9
- 10

National Policy Committee

1. Kurzban, I. (Chair) 444-3503
2. Brutus, P. (Co-chair) 899-4411
3. Little, C.
4. Forester, S.
5. Ray, M.
6. Foulkes, M.
7. Cyriaque, C.
8. Thompson, E.
9. McGroarty, R.
- 10

Media Committee

1. Metellus, G. (Chair) 375-5393
2. Paul, C. (Co-chair) 949-8239
3. Kolner, N.
4. Half, L.
5. Romer, D.
6. Bouk, P.
7. Bastien, M.
8. Sicard, A.
9. *Thompson name*
- 10.

Fundraising Arm

1. Francois, R. (Chair) 948-8811
2. Moise, R. (Co-chair)
3. Joseph, Carlo J.
4. Ray, M.
5. Forester, S.
6. LaFortune, J.
7. Despinosse, J.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Grass Roots Committee

1. Lafortune, J. (Chair) 620-3975
2. Lavarice, G. (Co-chair) 758-4074
3. Despinosse, j.
4. Faulkes, M.
5. Romer, D.
6. Sicard. A.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

NOTE: Please refer any question/suggestion/information you may have by calling the respective Chairs/Co-chairs of your Committee of choice.