

Rep. Johnson offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 203.

A resolution to urge the President of the United States to grant temporary protected status to Haitian earthquake victims.

Whereas, On January 12, 2010, Haiti was hit by an earthquake of epic proportions. With tens of thousands of dead and countless others injured and missing, the human toil and suffering cannot be expressed in mere words. This disaster came at a time when the nation was still reeling from the effects of a series of back-to-back hurricanes and tropical storms that left hundreds dead and caused millions of dollars of property damage this past summer. As would be hoped in a tragedy this severe, the entire world has responded to the call for aid and support through organized relief efforts and individual contributions. The United States has been a leader in organizing this relief effort, and we could do much more to aid the survivors by simple changes to our immigration policy. We could grant temporary protected status to those Haitian earthquake victims; and

Whereas, Temporary protected status would give Haitian refugees one year to establish themselves in the United States. After one year, these refugees could be granted permanent status. According to a 2005 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report on Haitian immigration policy, however, the United States has never given Haitian refugees protected immigration status in any broad measure. Unlike the treatment of Cuban refugees who are typically considered to be political refugees, and refugees from Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador who were granted 18-month temporary protected status following 2004's Hurricane Mitch, for example, Haitian refugees have typically been considered to be economic refugees. Unless they can demonstrate a credible fear of political retribution on return, Haitian refugees are generally detained and returned to Haiti; and

Whereas, The President of the United States has the authority to override current immigration thresholds if he or she determines that an unforeseen emergency exists or an exception would be justified by grave humanitarian concerns or national interest. Clearly, the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake exemplifies grave humanitarian suffering. Moreover, as to national interest, as stated on the Statute of Liberty:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me
-Emma Lazarus, *The New Colossus*, 1883

Michigan stands at the ready, should the President grant temporary protected status to these refugees. We as a state would gladly accept not less than 20,000 earthquake victims as part of our state's earthquake emergency response; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we hereby memorialize the President of the United States to grant temporary protected status to Haitian earthquake victims; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States and the Secretary of Homeland Security.