

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

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April 20, 2009
Start: 01:23 pm
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HELD AT: Hearing Room
 250 Broadway, 14th Floor

B E F O R E: KENDALL STEWART
 Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
 Kendall Stewart
 Charles Barron
 David I. Weprin
 Annabel Palma
 Julissa Ferreras
 Mathieu Eugene

A P P E A R A N C E S

Jocelyn McCalla
Haitian-Americans United for Progress

Guy Sansaricq
Regional Bishop of Brooklyn
Diocese of Brooklyn

Samuel Pierre
Brooklyn Liaison
Congressman Edolphus Towns

Dr. Fritz Fils-Aime
President
Haitian-American Veterans Association

CHAIRPERSON STEWART: Good

afternoon. I am Dr. Kendall Stewart, Chair of the New York City Council's Committee on Immigration.

I would like to thank everyone for coming to this afternoon's hearing on Proposal Resolution 1595-A.

This resolution relates to an issue that I have personally been interested in for quite some time

now. I am pleased that it is finally getting the

attention that it deserves. Since 2008, I have

advocated with and on behalf of the Haitians in my

district and for temporary protective status for

Haitians. In June 2008, I chaired the committee's

hearing on this issue after several meetings with

members of my district, as well as leaders and

advocates of the Haitian community. At that time

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western

Hemisphere, was still trying to recover from

Hurricane Jeanne of 2004, Tropical Storm Alpha of

2005, hurricanes in 2007, as well as food riots,

deaths, drug trafficking and violent crimes.

Things have only gotten worse. By September of

2008, Haiti suffered through four more storms that

led to the deaths of hundreds and the homelessness

of more than one million. In addition, the

1 federal government has threatened to deport more
2 than 30,000 Haitians from the U.S., effectively
3 breaking up families and communities nationwide.
4 It is obvious to me and many other politicians and
5 advocates that the U.S. government should grant
6 temporary protective status to Haitians. If
7 granted, Haitians will be able to remain in the
8 United States while Haiti recovers from the
9 extensive set of tragedies that it has had to
10 endure. As I said before, I have been at the
11 forefront of this issue for quite some time now.
12 I am pleased to be a sponsor on this resolution.
13 Even after today's hearing, I plan to continue in
14 my advocacy efforts with regard to this issue.
15 Haiti clearly meets the requirements establish in
16 the Immigration and Nationalization Act. The
17 country has suffered as a result of natural
18 disasters, political unrest and economic
19 challenges. Haiti cannot handle the return of
20 nationals because of these extraordinary temporary
21 conditions and will prevent them from returning
22 safely. I look forward to voting on Proposal
23 Resolution 1595-A. Once again, I would like to
24 thank everyone for coming to today's hearing. I
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2 think my colleague Mathieu Eugene has an opening
3 statement and I will grant him the opportunity at
4 this time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you
6 very much, Mr. Chair. Let me first and foremost
7 thank everyone here, especially those who come to
8 testify. Thank you also to all of my colleagues.
9 This is a resolution that I introduced. As you
10 know, I'm the first Haitian-American to be elected
11 to the City Council. This is an honor and
12 privilege and I feel that the Haitian people have
13 the right to receive the TPS. I want to thank my
14 colleagues, the co-sponsors of this resolution.
15 This is the right thing to do. I have been
16 working on that and I want to also take the
17 opportunity to thank the Chairman for your effort
18 and support to this resolution. Thank you for
19 hosting this hearing. I've been talking to many
20 members in Congress also. Even though he is not
21 here, I would like to thank Senator Chuck Schumer.
22 I sent a letter to President Barack Obama to ask
23 him to do something to intervene. I know that his
24 plate is full and he has a lot of major issues to
25 deal with. I sent a letter also to Janet

1 Napolitano, the person in charge of Homeland
2 Security. Senator Chuck Schumer also is helping.
3 He also sent a letter to President Barack Obama.
4 This is a team effort. We are all working
5 together because we do believe that Haitian people
6 deserve the TPS. I've heard also firsthand from
7 family members, friends and President Preval
8 himself of the unthinkable damage Haiti
9 experienced after several environmental disasters
10 like the four horrific tropical storms that took
11 place within the span of one month. Numbers just
12 don't do justice to the devastation upon the
13 entire country reaching every city, town and
14 village. Most recovery efforts prior to these
15 storms were instantly erased, leaving nearly 1,000
16 dead and hundreds of thousands without homes. In
17 total, these storms caused more than \$1 billion
18 that represented approximately 15% of Haiti's
19 gross domestic product. It reserved much of the
20 progress the country had made after Hurricane
21 Jeanne in 2004. TPS was previously granted
22 because of a natural disaster to Nicaragua and
23 Honduras after Hurricane Mitch in 1999 and also El
24 Salvador in 2001. It is only fair that Haiti be
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2 treated equally in accord with the response given
3 to these other countries. Over 250,000 Haitian-
4 Americans live in the City of New York, while more
5 than 500,000 live in the metropolitan area. The
6 city has not only one of the largest
7 concentrations of Haitian-born Americans, but it
8 also represents the center of our community. In
9 addition, part of the earnings Haitians make here
10 are sent to families back in Haiti through
11 remittances, which contribute to rebuilding and
12 the recovery effort. It is absolutely crucial
13 that I stress the fact that the money Haitian
14 families earn here in New York directly impact
15 Haiti's ability to fully recover from the
16 devastation caused by these storms. Granting TPS
17 can serve as a necessary form of humanitarian
18 relief, allowing Haiti time for a full recovery.
19 Urging Congress to pass H.R. 144 will send a
20 powerful message that the City of New York has
21 said that Congress must act to protect the
22 livelihood that Haitian-Americans have worked so
23 hard to preserve. We simply cannot sit back while
24 Haitian-Americans who are part of the social and
25 cultural fabric that makes our city strong and

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2 prosperous are deported to a country that can
3 barely support its own citizens. More important,
4 I believe this resolution speaks to a current
5 issue within the community on immigrants; that all
6 immigrants deserve to be treated with fairness and
7 dignity and that the tragedies or time of crisis
8 that occur in foreign nations can directly affect
9 the lives of immigrants who came from these
10 countries. The city cannot turn a blind eye
11 during these times. We should do all we can to
12 assist those in need. It is unacceptable to see
13 Haitian veterans who have put their lives in
14 danger to save United States being deported to
15 their country. This is not acceptable. This is
16 the United States dream, United States ideal. I
17 believe by trying to pass the resolution for
18 asking for the TPS is the right thing to do and it
19 is a moral responsibility for the United States to
20 make sure that we help those Haitian right now.
21 Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: Also joining
23 us we have Council Member Palma from the Bronx.
24 We have Council Member Ferreras. This is the
25 first time she's joined us. We want to welcome

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2 you to City Hall and to the Council and to the
3 best committee in the Council, the Immigration
4 Committee. Does anyone else have a statement? At
5 this time we will call the first panel, but before
6 we do that we would like to take a vote. We'll
7 keep the vote open as other members come in. Let
8 me first let you know that we have up here also is
9 Israel Rodriguez, staff member on policy, and we
10 also have William Martin, the clerk who will call
11 the roll, and we have Julene Beckford, our
12 counsel. Call the roll please.

13 WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin,
14 Committee Clerk, roll calling the Committee on
15 Immigration Resolution 1595-A. Council Member
16 Stewart?

17 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: Aye. I will
18 take this opportunity to speak. This is something
19 that I've been looking forward to for a long time.
20 It is very important that we not only give
21 temporary protected status to Haitians who are in
22 this country because when we look at other
23 countries that have been given the status, they
24 have not endured or even gone through half of what
25 the folks in Haiti have gone through. There is no

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2 reason why Haiti should be denied this opportunity
3 to have temporary protected status and so I vote
4 aye.

5 WILLIAM MARTIN: Palma?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I vote aye.
7 I just want to add that I'm proud to be a co-
8 sponsor of this legislation and I want to commend
9 Council Member Mathieu for bringing it to continue
10 to raise awareness on this issue. I was in
11 Florida in 2002 working some elections when a boat
12 had arrived in South Florida with some Haitian
13 immigrants and the way the U.S. government treated
14 them was despicable. I think that we need to
15 continue to make sure that government at all
16 levels understand that these are human beings and
17 that we need to make sure that as a nation we're
18 protecting everyone, including those that don't
19 live in the United States. Thank you.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: Eugene?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I proudly
22 vote yes. Aye. I would like also to thank again
23 one more time from the bottom of my heart on my
24 own behalf and on the behalf of all of my brothers
25 and sister Haitians, I would like to thank all of

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2 my colleagues who are co-sponsors of this
3 resolution. Thank you very much.

4 WILLIAM MARTIN: Ferreras?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I vote
6 aye. I'd like to add that being of Dominican
7 descent and having the Haitian community as my
8 neighbor, brothers and sisters, I understand
9 firsthand the atrocities that have occurred. We
10 pray for stability in that country, but in the
11 interim I believe that it is the responsibility of
12 our government to foster a safe haven for those
13 that have ventured those very tough waters. Most,
14 if not a lot, die on the way here. So once they
15 get here, we should be welcoming them with the
16 embrace of safety of what the United States of
17 America means. So I vote aye. Thank you.

18 WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote of four
19 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
20 abstentions, item is adopted. Members please sign
21 the committee report. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: We will keep
23 it open until the end of this hearing for the
24 other members who have not arrived yet. We would
25 like to call on Guy Sansaricq. We have Jocelyn

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2 McCalla, Dr. Fritz Fils-Aime and Samuel Pierre
3 from Congressman Ed Towns. So we're going to have
4 all four of them on the same panel. The best
5 thing to do is introduce yourself and then you can
6 start. You can start from the left going right.
7 If you have any testimony we would like to have
8 that if it's in print.

9 GUY SANSARICQ: My name is Guy
10 Sansaricq. I'm the regional bishop of Brooklyn,
11 the Catholic Church. Mr. Senator, distinguished
12 members of the City Council of New York, I'm
13 respectfully asking you to urge President Obama to
14 designate the country of Haiti for TPS, that is
15 temporary protected status, for a period of 18
16 months with specification to stop all deportations
17 to Haiti and also to grant work permits and a
18 Social Security number to all Haitians presently
19 residing here without proper documentation. This
20 request is dictated by humanitarian
21 considerations. Haiti has not yet recovered from
22 the four devastating hurricanes that hit it within
23 a period of five weeks last summer. Relief aid
24 has been provided to the populations that have
25 lost their crops and housing, but little has been

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2 made in terms of rebuilding the economy. At the
3 moment the greatest investments in Haiti come from
4 the Haitian residents in the United States who
5 sent remittances to assist their relatives. If
6 that is also cut, that country that lies in the
7 outskirts of the United States and has played an
8 important role in our history will be left to
9 perish. Important investments need to be made in
10 the areas of reforestation, road construction,
11 agricultural and industrial business as well as
12 education. An impoverished government cannot
13 afford massive programs without important
14 international assistance. Besides these programs
15 will have no short time results. The deportation
16 of thousands of Haitians from here would
17 constitute a humanitarian tragedy of great
18 proportion that can be avoided by the granting of
19 TPS to the industrious Haitian citizens who have
20 sought refuge here without proper documentation.
21 Honorable Council women and men, your active and
22 intense advocacy on behalf of the Haitians will be
23 greatly appreciated by all right minded citizens
24 of your constituencies. Imploring the Lord's
25 blessing upon all of you, I am and remain

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2 sincerely yours, Guy Sansaricq.

3 JOCELYN MCCALLA: My name is
4 Jocelyn McCalla. I want to begin by thanking the
5 Committee on Immigration for extending an
6 invitation to testify to Haitian-Americans United
7 for Progress, HAUP. Temporary protected status is
8 an important measure that has long been denied
9 Haitian nationals in the United States although
10 they have clearly qualified since the measure was
11 adopted by the United States government. I will
12 go more in depth on this matter, but allow me to
13 first say a few words about the Haitian-Americans
14 United for Progress. HAUP stands uniquely in the
15 New York City area as the oldest community-based
16 organization that emerged 34 years ago to help
17 resettle and integrate Haitian asylum seekers as
18 well as advocate on their behalf. Amongst our
19 members, we proudly include Bishop Guy Sansaricq,
20 a refugee from the Duvalier dictatorship which
21 caused thousands of Haitians to immigrate to the
22 United States and make New York City their home.
23 We like to believe that it is thanks to the
24 efforts deployed by HAUP and other Haitian CBOs
25 and advocacy organization that today many Haitian-

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2 Americans can be found at the helm of some of the
3 leading private and public sector institutions
4 that make New York such a great city. HAUP is
5 located in Cambria Heights, which is home to the
6 largest Haitian-American enclave outside of
7 Brooklyn. While HAUP began as a volunteer-based
8 organization focused initially on responding to
9 the needs to Haitian immigrants and refugees, it
10 has since expanded and offered and offers it
11 services to anyone who qualifies. We serve
12 annually some 15,000 people. We are thankful to
13 the City and the State of New York which fund many
14 of our programs. We are most thankful for the
15 strong support of Councilman Leroy Comrie and the
16 good relations that we have had with many of the
17 members of the Council including some members of
18 this committee and in particular members of this
19 committee. I have long been involved personally
20 with promoting Haitian rights under U.S. and
21 international law. I let the National Coalition
22 for Haitian Rights as executive director for
23 several years. I have testified several times
24 before Congress on issues of asylum, refugee
25 rights and fairness. The coalition led national

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2 campaigns on behalf of Haitian refugees which
3 resulted in the adoption of the Cuban-Haitian
4 Adjustment Act as well as the Haitian Refugee
5 Fairness Immigration Act. I am quite familiar
6 with TPS and the twist and turns associated with
7 TPS. Let me say something about some of the
8 issues related to TPS. Exactly a month ago, on
9 March 20th, President Barack Obama signed an
10 executive order extending the temporary stay in
11 the United States of an estimated 3,500 Liberians
12 for another 12 months. Liberians breathed a sigh
13 of relief because their current stay of
14 deportation would have expired on March 31, 2009.
15 There is nothing that distinguishes Haitians from
16 Liberians. The circumstances that led to their
17 seeking refuge in the United States are not
18 different. Political upheaval, a shattered
19 economy, a dysfunctional and feeble government,
20 the presence of thousands of UN peacekeepers;
21 these are the common ground that justify the
22 presence of Haitians and Liberians on American
23 soil. The main argument against granting TPS to
24 the Haitians is the fear that it will trigger a
25 massive exodus from Haiti to the United States.

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2 By the way, TPS does not apply to Haitians who are
3 outside of this country. TPS applies uniquely to
4 Haitians already in this country and would not
5 benefit anybody from Haiti who is not included in
6 this. With respect to the argument against TPS we
7 respectfully disagree. Haiti has near zero forest
8 cover and Haiti cannot provide enough wood to
9 build the boats that would support a massive
10 exodus of Haitians. The last major influx of boat
11 people to the United States occurred in 1980 when
12 125,000 Cuban refugees and about 18,000 Haitians
13 made it to the shores of Florida. The Mariel
14 Exodus as the Cuban exodus was called was heavily
15 facilitated by boats deployed from Florida to pick
16 up the Cubans whom the Cuban government allowed to
17 leave en masse at the time. That was almost 30
18 years ago. United States Coast Guard cutters have
19 been patrolling the waters just outside of Haiti
20 since September 1981 when President Ronald Reagan
21 signed an executive order specifically targeted
22 Haitian refugees. The Haitian Migrant
23 Interdiction Operation authorized U.S. Coast Guard
24 to intercept on the high seas any vessels flying
25 the Haitian flag or carrying Haitians and to return

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2 its passengers to Haiti after a perfunctory
3 interview that paid lip service to the prohibition
4 against refoulement which is an international
5 provision contained in the United Nations
6 Convention on the Status of Refugees. The United
7 States does not plan on suspending Coast Guard
8 interdiction now or in the future. Interdiction
9 remains a key component of United States policy
10 towards Haiti, although it is carried out with
11 little fanfare. It is effective. The Coast Guard
12 catches most Haitian boat people before they are
13 too far away from Haitian shores. In 1992 and
14 1994, during the period when a military junta
15 ruled Haiti with an iron hand, the United States
16 Coast Guard intercepted more than 60,000 Haitian
17 people. They were all taken, by the way, to
18 Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. It coordinates its
19 interdiction operations with the Bahamas which
20 promptly repatriates Haitians who was ashore or
21 found floating at sea near their shores.
22 President Bill Clinton granted Deferred
23 Enforcement Departure to Haitian immigrants in the
24 United States. That was back in 1996. DED is a
25 modified form of TPS. Granting DED did not lead

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2 to mass exodus from Haiti. Later, President
3 Clinton supported the enactment of the Haitian
4 Refugee Immigration Fairness Act, a measure that
5 had the unanimous support of the members of the
6 Congressional Black Caucus and many other members
7 from both parties. Enactment of HRIFA did not
8 lead to mass exodus; in fact, there has been no
9 mass exodus from Haiti in the last 15 years.

10 There is widespread support for TPS for Haitians.
11 Most of the major U.S. newspapers have argued that
12 Haitians should be granted TPS. They include the
13 New York Times, the New York Daily News, the
14 Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, San Francisco
15 Chronicle and the Miami Herald, among others.
16 National groups, such as the United States
17 Conference of Catholic Bishops, the NAACP, the
18 National Immigration Forum and several statewide
19 immigration coalitions, including the New York
20 Immigration Coalition have affirmed or reaffirmed
21 support for the temporary measure. The Council of
22 the City of New York would not be out of step with
23 the mainstream of American thoughts by voting in
24 favor of Resolution 1595-A. In fact, it would be
25 an additional signal to the Obama administration

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2 that the constituency for TPS for Haitians
3 continues to grow and now enjoys the support of a
4 city that is home to a significant segment of the
5 Haitian Diaspora. We see signs that that
6 administration is listening. Last week, Secretary
7 of State Hillary Clinton indicated during a visit
8 to Haiti that the administration was seriously
9 considering reversing past policies and granting
10 Haitians the well deserved respite from fears of
11 deportation. We urge the Council to put TPS for
12 Haitians on the fast track by not wasting another
13 minute in approving the sensible resolution that
14 is before this committee. Let's be clear, the
15 resolution that is before this committee supports
16 a legislative remedy but the White House has the
17 power now to act. It does not need the force of
18 legislation to do so. That power was given to the
19 executive branch years ago. President Obama
20 should do the right thing by Haitians. The New
21 York City Council should help him take that step
22 promptly. Finally, I would urge the Council,
23 should TPS be granted, and we truly hope that it
24 will be sooner rather than later, that the Council
25 makes provisions to help the Haitians achieve

1 their status in as large a number as possible.
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3 TPS, as I said, is a temporary protection from
4 deportation. It may be granted for no more than
5 18 months. We've heard arguments from members of
6 this committee and my colleague Bishop Sansaricq
7 has also spoken about the benefit to Haiti. I
8 agree that there are benefits to the City of New
9 York. The benefits to the City of New York are
10 the following. Municipalities like New York which
11 hosts a large number of TPS beneficiaries would
12 benefit tremendously from having constituents who
13 possess a legal work permit and can contribute to
14 the revenues from taxation. Consequently, it is
15 in the best interest of the people of New York to
16 ensure maximum Haitian participation in an
17 eventual TPS program. We believe the benefits to
18 New York City outweigh the costs associated with
19 TPS implementation. In conclusion, we should
20 commend the sponsors of Resolution 1595,
21 particularly Council Eugene, for their vision and
22 support for TPS for Haitians. Adoption of the
23 resolution will send a strong signal to the Obama
24 administration and to the Congress that New York
25 City, home to hundreds of thousands of Haitians,

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2 remains sensitive to the needs of its constituents
3 and looks forward to the day when we can celebrate
4 the granting of TPS to Haitians. Thank you.

5 DR. FRITZ FILS-AIME: Good
6 afternoon, Council Stewart and the remainder of
7 the committee. Thank you so much Councilman
8 Eugene for inviting me to be here today. My name
9 is Dr. Fritz Fils-Aime. I'm the president of the
10 Haitian-American Veterans Association. I've been
11 working in the issue of immigration since the
12 1980s. HAUP was under the leadership of Bishop
13 Guy Sansaricq then who took a bunch of college
14 students and gave us something meaningful to do in
15 the community. We were ESL instructors. I held
16 the position of job developer at Haitian American
17 United for Progress. I also started a home care
18 service there. At some point I joined the
19 Haitian-American Training Institute which was
20 directed by Mr. Dahl [phonetic] and went to North
21 Carolina and Florida following the migratory route
22 of the boat people who were migrating from Florida
23 up to North Carolina to farm in the tobacco and
24 farm apple, et cetera. They were farm workers.
25 My duties were to do translation and also to go

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2 into the camps at night and teach them ESL. Also,
3 I prepared at the University of North Carolina
4 which allowed us access to the audio department to
5 prepare workshops on cassettes so that we can
6 bring this information to the camps. As a Vietnam
7 era veteran in this country, I definitely applaud
8 the work of this committee in introducing this
9 resolution. I returned from Haiti about two weeks
10 ago. My mandate was to do a census on American
11 Haitian veterans that have been deported. So far
12 I've identified over 150 and this was a drop in
13 the bucket. Obviously there's a lot more work to
14 be done. There's a committee actually in Haiti
15 contacting other veterans. We call Haiti the
16 poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. I
17 personally don't like that because we're very
18 rich. We have a very rich culture. We've been
19 very unfortunate and hopefully with the new
20 administration here it seems that they are gearing
21 towards giving us a little bit more respect
22 because that's all that we ask for basically; the
23 respect to determine our own fate and not have so
24 much interference. Haitians have come here out of
25 a necessity to live, not due to nefarious

1 intentions. They've built families here. They've
2 had children who have become part of this society.
3 They learn to speak English. I remember when we
4 taught English, we had to teach them how to go to
5 the post office. We had to teach them how to go
6 to a supermarket. We had to teach them the basics
7 to live here. So you take some of these people
8 after they have acclimated themselves to this
9 society and living here and then you take them and
10 you send them back. It's like culture shock upon
11 culture shock. Some of the deportees that I've
12 met in Haiti were young when they came here.
13 You're returning them to an unfamiliar climate.
14 There is no employment in Haiti. I don't know if
15 you guys are aware of that. It's not like you can
16 go to open a newspaper and go to the classifieds
17 and find a job. When they return these folks to
18 the country, their first experience going back to
19 the country is they go straight to jail. From
20 that experience hopefully there's someone in the
21 country that can speak up for them. I visited the
22 jails down there that have deportees actually and
23 you have deportees that have been there for over a
24 year waiting for someone so they can patriot them
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2 in the country. Some come in and they spend a
3 week. You hear different stories. But you return
4 to the country and then you go to jail. So then
5 you're in the society and you have no job. Being
6 a deportee in Haiti, you're automatically labeled
7 a criminal. It's funny because I spoke to the
8 chief of police while I was done there and many of
9 the crimes that are committed there are not by
10 deportees. But once they're returned to Haiti
11 they're automatically labeled a criminal. We know
12 that there are some deportees that are returned
13 due to criminal situations. Of course, myself, if
14 someone has served their time here, then they
15 should have a second chance in the society. They
16 shouldn't be deported. I went down to Haiti with
17 the veterans so let me speak a moment about the
18 veterans. We pledge allegiance to the flag of the
19 United States and we took an oath to defend the
20 Constitution of this country. When I went to
21 Haiti, I went on a whim, not really expected to
22 find veterans that were deported. I was appalled.
23 The phone rang constantly after I left the radio
24 station and consequently I appeared on national
25 television. It was unbelievable. We happened to

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2 have in the country at that time journalists from
3 Taiwan and Canada who were doing stories on
4 deportees. When they caught wind of the fact that
5 the United States was actually deporting their
6 veterans they reached out to me because they
7 wanted to find out why. I had no answers for
8 them. From what I've heard so far, roll call has
9 been made and it seems like it's almost unanimous
10 that the Council is really backing Councilman
11 Eugene and the co-sponsors of this particular
12 bill. I commend you very much. I also ask you to
13 make sure you include that under no circumstances
14 should veterans be deported. I have with me
15 documentation of veterans who have good conduct
16 medals; I met two who have a purple heart. This
17 is very emotional for me. I am a veteran and I
18 know what I went through in the military. Thirty
19 years later I still suffer from the consequences
20 of being in the United States military. I know
21 Bishop Sansaricq can tell you personally that he's
22 seen my struggles from the time that I left the
23 military. It's taken a lot of resolution and
24 truly being a military man to be where I'm at
25 today and to overcome the situations that we face

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2 in the military. These guys have been sent back
3 without their entitled benefits and they have
4 nothing to live for. Yet, the majority of them I
5 met, they hold on with the hope that something
6 will happen. When I came in, I became that hope.
7 I am going to the State Department and I'm going
8 to Veterans Affairs and I'm already involved with
9 United Veterans and the Commissioner's Office of
10 Veterans Affairs here. I help put together the
11 Veteran's Day parade every year. One of the
12 mandates of the Haitian-American Veterans
13 Association was to educate the society and to
14 allow them to know how Haitians have played a role
15 in this country, beginning with the Revolutionary
16 War. We fought in every war in this country.
17 We've earned a place in this society. We've
18 earned a place where we should be respected and
19 definitely we should be respected in Haiti. Haiti
20 is the first independent republic in the Western
21 Hemisphere. The United States today would not be
22 the United States were it not for the Louisiana
23 Purchase and many other things that occurred as a
24 direct result of Haiti. We have a very rich
25 history but we stay humble. We are not a violent

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2 people. All we ask for is respect. As I said
3 before, I commend you guys. I really hope with
4 this format and with the committee that you can
5 impress upon the Congress, the Senate and
6 eventually the president of the United States.
7 I'm watching the press and I notice that he wants
8 to reach out and he wants to do something
9 different. I guess it starts here. This is where
10 it starts. We have a foundation here. Welcome,
11 Councilman Barron. I'm looking at champions here
12 and I'm very pleased. I just want to end by
13 saying that these gentleman here have been in the
14 community for a very long time. I grew up
15 watching them doing their thing. They're a little
16 older than me. We in the community have not
17 learned how to come together and be a force.
18 That's the biggest problem that Haitians have. We
19 are from a place where we have a lot of fears.
20 It's not because we don't want to. When I was in
21 Haiti I received more than 200 delegations
22 throughout the country who want better for their
23 country, but they don't have the means and they
24 don't have a stable government in place. We're
25 here and we're trying to affect change so that one

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2 day we can hopefully come together so that we can
3 affect change in the government. We have
4 Councilman Mathieu Eugene and hopefully we'll have
5 many more as a political force to say to Congress
6 to act. I really have a lot of hope right now.
7 I've always had a lot of hope because I believe in
8 the Haitian people. For someone who was raised
9 here, people do not understand my love and why
10 when I go to Haiti it's hard for me to come back
11 home. I have two homes. I have children here. I
12 have grandchildren. I have roots, but my
13 spiritual root is in Haiti. I was a soldier for
14 the United States military and I'm a soldier in
15 spiritual aspects for Haiti.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: I would like
17 to cut you off there because if you take up all
18 the time then Councilman Barron wouldn't get a
19 chance to speak. We have been joined by
20 Councilman Barron who is going to be given an
21 opportunity to vote on this resolution at this
22 time. Then we will have Mr. Samuel Pierre from
23 Congressman Ed Towns' office. Councilman Barron?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you
25 very much. I was going to vote for the resolution

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2 until Council Member Stewart just got on my last
3 nerve. So I'm not sure of how I'm going to vote
4 now. It's my honor to support this resolution.
5 It's the very least that we can do. It's a drop
6 in the bucket but an important one. Over the
7 years, much respect for Bishop and all the work
8 that you have done, all of you over the years. I
9 see us as one people. We're all one African
10 people dropped off all over the place. Your pain
11 is our pain. Your victories are our victories.
12 Our losses are your losses. We've got to be
13 together as one. As President Barack Obama
14 reaches out to Hugo Chavez and Castro and Iran and
15 North Korea, he needs to talk about Haiti and
16 Africa and not see Somalis as pirates but as a
17 serious issue of dumping toxic wastes in waters as
18 causing a generation of Somali people to die. So
19 we need to really look at all of these
20 international issues. Particularly Haiti and
21 America, as you have stated, America should be
22 indebted to Haiti for the Haitian revolution that
23 really cased the selling of the Louisiana Purchase
24 and all of the heroes that inspired us in this
25 country to fight and make change. The least we

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2 could do is protect Haiti. As a matter of fact,
3 if they would pay Haiti their reparations, France
4 and America, they wouldn't have to worry about
5 anything. What they really need to do is just
6 give up the reparations and we wouldn't have the
7 economic problems that we're having in Haiti and
8 other countries around the world. So it's my
9 pleasure to vote yes on this resolution. We're
10 with you as the struggle continues and we're with
11 you always.

12 SAMUEL PIERRE: My name is Sam
13 Pierre. I'm the Brooklyn South Liaison and also
14 the immigration specialist for U.S. Congressman
15 and Chairman of the Government Reform Oversight
16 Commission, Edolphus 'Ed' Towns. I would like to
17 bring greetings from the congressman.
18 Unfortunately he was unable to be here, but he
19 sent me, so I hope I'm a good replacement. I'd
20 like to start out by thanking Mr. Chairman for
21 allowing me the opportunity to speak. I'd also
22 like to thank Dr. Mathieu and my two City Council
23 Members, Mr. Barron and Mr. Fidler who isn't here.
24 I would like to begin by talking about the
25 resolution. I'm very happy that the City Council

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2 has decided to move forward with it. I'm very
3 proud to be a Haitian-American living in Brooklyn,
4 New York. There are a couple of things that I do
5 want to talk about. For the H.R. 144 we have a
6 number of the members of the New York delegation
7 who actually have co-sponsored it, which include
8 members Jerry Nadler, Yvette Clarke, Eliot Engel,
9 Charlie Rangel, Congressman Towns, Joseph Crowley,
10 Maxine Waters, Jose Serrano and a lot of other
11 members in Congress. They have co-sponsored this
12 bill. I do want to speak to the original sponsor
13 which is Representative Alcee Hastings from
14 Florida who has a large amount of Haitian
15 constituency in his district. I've been working
16 very closely with Stephanie Desir-Jean who is
17 actually the director of community outreach in
18 Hastings office. She's been keeping me updated on
19 what's been going on down there because they have
20 the largest Haitian population. Brooklyn, New
21 York is the second largest. We've been working
22 together in trying to come up with different
23 resolutions on how we can help get this through.
24 One of the things that we do not want to fall
25 victim again, as we know H.R. 522 was adopted in

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2 the 100th Congress and unfortunately it didn't
3 make it to the Senate chamber or the desk of the
4 president. So one of the things I definitely want
5 to see us do is be able to take this bill from the
6 House of Representatives but over to the Senate
7 because that will be a way that we can move
8 forward to getting passed. If it doesn't get to
9 the Senate chamber then it will never reach the
10 desk of the president. As the members of this
11 committee have already stated, the president has
12 shown that he is dedicated and he really wants to
13 reach out to help other countries that are dealing
14 with these situations. Going back to what I said
15 earlier about being a proud Haitian-American
16 living in Brooklyn, I have been working very
17 closely, especially with Councilman Mathieu Eugene
18 in trying to put ourselves in a position where we
19 will be heard and H.R. 144 would be in a situation
20 where there's question of it getting to the Senate
21 chamber. We need their votes in order for the law
22 to be passed. I think that doing things like this
23 is very important. But we also need to focus on
24 what direction we need to take to be able to get
25 this past the House of Representatives.

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2 Congressman Ed Towns and also Congresswoman Maxine
3 Waters are very instrumental in helping the
4 Haitian community. A lot of people might not know
5 this but Congresswoman Maxine Waters was telling
6 me how she was very, very instrumental in helping
7 President Aristide leave the country of Haiti.
8 She actually got on a helicopter, went to Haiti
9 and was in the helicopter with him when he was
10 leaving. So she has a passion for helping the
11 Haitian community. Congressman Ed Towns has a
12 huge Haitian constituency. As I said before, I'm
13 his immigration specialist as well and 75% of my
14 immigration work is from the Haitian community.
15 We have a large amount of people living in our
16 districts in Queens and Brooklyn that definitely
17 need this to go through. I applaud the members of
18 this committee and the chairman and Councilman
19 Mathieu Eugene for the great work they're doing
20 here. I also want to let you know that
21 Congressman Ed Towns has put 100% dedication into
22 pushing this bill. Not only that, but we would
23 also be working with Representative Hastings from
24 Florida to see what direction we can take to help
25 move this bill. Thank you very much.

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2 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: Thank you. I
3 have a few questions that I wanted to ask. If you
4 can, I would really appreciate it. It's not to
5 any one of you in particular and anyone can answer
6 the questions. Haiti is not too far from America;
7 likewise Cuba is not too far from America.

8 However, they are independent nations but if
9 someone happened to get to America from Cuba, the
10 American government fights to keep them here.

11 However, if someone comes from Haiti, the American
12 government fights to send them back. To me it's
13 an injustice. It's unfair that you can favor one
14 country over the other. Can you comment to that?

15 JOCELYN MCCALLA: The traditional
16 response to this kind of question is that in 1966
17 the United States Congress enacted the Cuban
18 Adjustment Act which essentially treats any Cuban
19 that sets foot in the United States as a refugee
20 and automatically grants that Cuban, whether the
21 person is seeking asylum or not, a status of
22 refugee and essentially gives them a pathway to
23 becoming a legal permanent resident. That
24 provision does not apply to Haitians or to anybody
25 else around the world. So the Cubans do enjoy

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2 special status. That status has been sort of
3 modified over the years. Because of the influx of
4 Cubans, the United States government has adopted a
5 policy which is a "wet foot, dry foot" policy.
6 That wet foot dry foot policy means that Cubans
7 will be eligible for the Cuban Adjustment Act of
8 1966 only if they are able to set foot on dry land
9 in the United States. Otherwise they can be
10 picked up and then returned to Guantanamo Bay,
11 Cuba, where there are processing sites, and
12 perhaps through refugee programs they can make it
13 back to the United States. But the distinction
14 between Cubans and Haitians is very clear.
15 Haitians do not enjoy special status.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: I do
17 understand that. I think we should seek to have
18 that changed now that there is some sort of
19 relationship with the government in Cuba. With
20 our government there seem to be some changes are
21 taking place where all of the restrictions and all
22 of those things are being removed. I think that
23 refugee status will no longer be applicable if the
24 conditions are changed between the two
25 governments. We're speaking about TPS. I know

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2 it's going to be a little while before it would
3 take effect, if the government were to adopt it.
4 However, we will imminently have some sort of
5 immigration plan where we'll then take in all
6 these people. Shouldn't we be working more
7 towards the comprehensive immigration plan that
8 will encompass all those folks who may need that
9 TPS right now and will not need it thereafter?
10 Shouldn't we be looking more at a comprehensive
11 immigration plan at this time?

12 SAMUEL PIERRE: I definitely agree.
13 One of the things that I feel is an issue we have
14 to look at is before we can even look to help
15 those in another country, we have issues back home
16 here with a lot of Haitian people that are
17 undocumented in our city right now. I do agree
18 because the TPS plan and the bill has to go
19 through different process and it's going to take
20 some time. I do agree with you, Mr. Chairman that
21 we do need to look into the comprehensive plan
22 right now and find ways that we can help from the
23 ground up. Like you said, again, it is going to
24 take some time and I do agree that we should look
25 into that plan. One thing I do want to add is

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2 that I think another way that we can help move the
3 process along is by educating the constituencies
4 that are already here, people who are scared of
5 going out or enjoying the different benefits that
6 are here for them. People that are undocumented
7 in the City of New York who feel that they can't
8 do certain things and that they can't enjoy some
9 of their rights. I think that that's another
10 option and another way that we can try to educate
11 the people that are here and letting them know
12 what they can do and helping them educate their
13 families and their young ones so that we can move
14 forward in our comprehensive plan.

15 JOCELYN MCCALLA: I don't know that
16 it is an either/or proposition. TPS is one step
17 removed from comprehensive immigration reform. I
18 think the committee has done the right thing by
19 voting unanimously for this resolution that is
20 before the committee. That vote for the
21 resolution sends a strong signal to the
22 administration and to Congress that this city
23 welcomes its immigrants and wants to do right by
24 the immigrant population that have for reasons
25 that have to do with circumstances of everybody

1 that some people who are not documented and so on.
2 I do hope that comprehensive immigration reform
3 comes to the table before Congress, but it may not
4 come to the table this year, even though there is
5 going to be some discussion about it. It may not
6 come next year. The campaign for comprehensive
7 immigration reform has been a longstanding one.
8 In fact, now it's been four or five years. So the
9 TPS itself is a measure that does not need the
10 stamp of Congress in order for it to be a fact of
11 life for Haitians. President Obama has the
12 authority today to issue an executive order
13 granting TPS to the Haitians. The support of
14 Congress is necessary to sort of indicate to
15 President Obama that in fact he has a great number
16 of people who would back him up and he should not
17 be worried about opposition to granting the TPS.
18 As I said earlier, the TPS has been granted to a
19 number of other nationalities, such as people from
20 Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Liberia and
21 Somalia even. So this kind of effort is one
22 necessary. It immediately provides relief from
23 deportation to Haitians who are already in the
24 city or in Florida so they can go about making a
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2 living, providing for their children, providing
3 for their family, sending in remittances when they
4 are employed to people back home providing
5 support. In a way, if you look at it in a
6 holistic manner, it is in the best interest not
7 only of the City of New York but also in the
8 national interest of the United States to grant
9 TPS to Haitians.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: I totally
11 agree with you. At the same time, looking at the
12 fact that even though we are told there is going
13 to be some comprehensive immigration plan that
14 will be adopted by the end of this year or early
15 next year. In the meantime we need to have
16 something to really prevent the folks from Haiti
17 being deported in mass droves. As a stop measure,
18 even though it's only 18 months, as a stop measure
19 we can do the TPS first while they continue on the
20 program of a comprehensive plan. I agree with
21 that. I want to ask another question about what
22 we can do for folks who are in the military.
23 There are quite a number of Haitian folks who may
24 have their green card. So they may be deployed in
25 Iraq or Afghanistan or any one of those places

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2 that are hot at this time. After leaving there
3 they may not seek to get their citizenship while
4 there. However, if there is any simple
5 misdemeanor or anything like that, they can be
6 deported because of the fact that they're not a
7 citizen. What do you think should be done in
8 order to prevent that? Should we file some sort
9 of legislation to grant special status or special
10 privilege of becoming a citizen, maybe shorten the
11 time? Some of them may not have had a green card
12 for five years and so you cannot file for
13 citizenship. We want to know if there is a
14 special thing that we should do to allow those
15 folks who might have served in the military and
16 may not have met the other requirements to become
17 citizens.

18 DR. FRITZ FILS-AIME: Becoming a
19 citizen in this country is an arduous process at
20 best as it stands for anyone.

21 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: They may not
22 have the money either.

23 DR. FRITZ FILS-AIME: Well they
24 charge you 600 something dollars now for the
25 application. As you were saying before, we were

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2 talking about comprehensive legislation, in our
3 communities this has to be grass roots. There has
4 to be education and for the people to become
5 involved. I don't think the people are involved.
6 It's good that this is happening on the
7 governmental level, but the people are pretty much
8 unaware of what's going on. There's not enough
9 education in the communities and there's not
10 enough response action where people are literally
11 stepping up as a group, as a voice and saying this
12 is what we want. This is something that we really
13 need to begin to take a look at, especially
14 leaders in the community, for us to bring that
15 information back and to make action, to motivate
16 people and to allow them to understand how
17 important that their voice is in this society.
18 This is a democratic society where we feel that
19 our voices still count. In Haiti right now there
20 are Vietnam veterans who fought, combat veterans.
21 We've had different conflicts with Iraq and now in
22 Afghanistan. I'm actually receiving emails from
23 Haitians that are in Afghanistan and Iraq. Unless
24 you're an officer you're not required to have
25 citizenship to join the military. Unfortunately,

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2 what has happened, especially in the past, people
3 were picked up from Panama and Jamaica and they
4 were brought into the military and then after the
5 conflict they were dumped back in those countries
6 with no benefits. This is something that is well
7 documented in case you want to look it up. So
8 this is something that has occurred before. Right
9 now it is something very important. I truly
10 believe that the fact that you join the military
11 and you take an oath to defend the Constitution
12 and to defend this flag. So that means that the
13 Constitution now has to be acknowledged for you
14 also as an individual and as a veteran. There
15 were veterans living a life. They made a mistake
16 10, 20 years ago and yet they went to school,
17 procured jobs, raised families and since 9/11 and
18 certain components of the Patriots Act and new
19 resolutions and immigration laws, et cetera, which
20 allows that anyone who has a felony, anyone that
21 has any contact with the law can be picked up and
22 deported. So it's not necessarily that these
23 folks are actually committing or actually being
24 disobedient to civil laws here. They do need
25 protection because unknowingly something will

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2 occur, or they may be guilty. Because sometimes
3 if you're caught up in the system, it affects your
4 work, it affects the family life. Someone may say
5 I'm going to plead guilty so we can get a reduced
6 sentence or have probation, et cetera, but you
7 have a record now. As a result of that record you
8 can be deported. So, yes, we definitely need more
9 protection. If some type of resolution can be
10 brought about to begin to address that issue, it
11 would be great.

12 SAMUEL PIERRE: That's a very good
13 question you asked, Mr. Chairman. The only thing
14 I wanted to add is that I personally feel that if
15 you enter the armed forces, the Navy, the Marines,
16 the Air Force, et cetera, if you die in combat,
17 what flag do they put on your body when they send
18 it back to your family? At your funeral what flag
19 is being laid on the casket? The American flag is
20 the flag that's being laid. It's not the Haitian
21 flag, it's not the Panamanian flag, and it's not
22 any other flag. Because of that I feel that we
23 should work on putting something in place where if
24 you were to enter the armed forces for the United
25 States of America there should be something in

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2 place where you can gain citizenship because these
3 are the things that you're fighting for. You're
4 fighting for American citizens. You're not
5 fighting for citizens of another country. So in
6 essence you are an American citizen because you're
7 fighting for the citizens of America. When you do
8 that the flag they put on your casket is an
9 American flag.

10 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: I would like
11 to see some sort of policy put in place whereby
12 once you join and you have served at least one
13 year of service you should be exempt from all of
14 the other requirements and be able to become a
15 citizen. Maybe we will put some sort of
16 resolution together calling on Congress to do
17 that. I think one year is enough and not wait the
18 five years. Just like if you're married to a U.S.
19 citizen and you're living here for three years,
20 you're entitled to become a U.S. citizen. You
21 don't have to serve anyplace once you are married
22 to a U.S. citizen. I think once you serve, after
23 one year, you should be able to become a U.S.
24 citizen foregoing the other four years. That is
25 something I think we should look into. We have

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2 been joined by one of our Council Members from
3 Queens, Council Member David Weprin. I would like
4 to give him an opportunity to vote and to make a
5 short statement if he desires.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: I'd like to
7 proudly vote yes on the resolution of which I'm a
8 co-sponsor. I also agree that there should be an
9 accommodation made for those that are in our armed
10 services and fighting for our country. They
11 should not have to wait for citizenship. I vote
12 aye.

13 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: I think
14 Council Member Eugene has a question.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I don't
16 really have a question but I have a comment. Let
17 me take the opportunity to thank Miss Julene
18 Beckford for her wonderful work. She has worked
19 so hard. Thank you very much. I want to thank
20 also my staff member. You did a wonderful job
21 also. Of course, all of us we are looking for the
22 comprehensive immigration reform. That's exactly
23 what we want. But in terms of TPS, this is
24 fairness. This is treating the Haitian people
25 with fairness and with dignity and respect. All

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2 the nationals from Nicaragua and other countries
3 have received TPS. Haitian people are entitled to
4 it. We are talking about people who are being
5 deported to Haiti after living in the United
6 States for many years, leaving behind children and
7 families. Children are left without fathers. We
8 are talking about people who have been paying
9 taxes and who have been part of the fabric of the
10 United States. It is an urgent need they are
11 entitled to. We are talking about American
12 values, family values. Our government is
13 destroying families; taking their fathers and
14 sending them back home to Haiti. This is
15 destroying American ideals. I believe this is our
16 moral responsibility. We in the American
17 government, community leaders, people, immigrants,
18 we have to come together to put more pressure on
19 the federal government to grant the TPS to
20 Haitians. President Barack Obama has the power to
21 sign the executive order to do it. It is not easy
22 for him. We're going to make it easier if we all
23 put pressure to push for the TPS for Haitian
24 people. I want to thank Fils-Aime and Sam for
25 your intervention. Department of Haitian veterans

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2 who have been deported to Haiti was not know. I
3 didn't know it. We have to raise awareness and
4 let people know what is going on. This is
5 unacceptable. Those veterans have put their life
6 in danger to save the United States, to stand and
7 fight for the United States and it isn't
8 acceptable that they have been deported to Haiti.
9 Again, by working together, as my colleague
10 Charles Barron said, we are in this all together.
11 By working together, believe me; we are going to
12 achieve exactly what is necessary, not only for
13 the Haitian people, but also for all of the
14 immigrants. Dignity, fairness and respect are
15 what they deserve. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: Thank you,
17 Council Member Eugene. I have one question. What
18 can New Yorkers do to help Haitians in the U.S.
19 and in Haiti? What can we do? What ideas do you
20 have? You are out there in the trenches. I want
21 to know what ideas you have that we can do to help
22 Haitians in the U.S. and also in Haiti.

23 JOCELYN MCCALLA: In my
24 presentation to your committee I urged the Council
25 of the City of New York to support integration of

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2 Haitians in the life of the city. Should TPS be
3 granted, there will be tens of thousand eligible
4 for TPS. These people might because of a limited
5 registration period might not be able to enjoy the
6 benefits because they might miss the benefits. So
7 there needs to be a campaign that informs people
8 of their right to that benefit if it is granted.
9 There needs to be support from community-based
10 organizations. For example, the Haitian-Americans
11 United for Progress and other community-based
12 organizations that may have the capacity, that
13 have the people or if they don't have the capacity
14 could hire the people to make sure that the people
15 who should benefit do benefit from it. The third
16 thing would be to sort of continue to call for
17 comprehensive immigration reform as a basis upon
18 which we can have a rationale immigration policy
19 and a policy that helps people nationally. Now
20 there's a distinction between national policy,
21 what the federal government does and what
22 municipalities and states do. Unfortunately
23 government sort of treats globally the question of
24 immigration but has not put in a lot of money into
25 immigrant integration. I believe the second part

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2 of this effort has to do with indicating to
3 members of Congress. Congressman Towns has been a
4 longstanding advocate for Haitian rights. I
5 remember having worked with him over the years and
6 particularly one of his main legislative aides,
7 Mrs. Brenda Pillars [phonetic], who unfortunately
8 passed away several years ago. I believe that
9 helping people become participant in their
10 livelihood, in their community, and dealing with
11 the problems of their community is essential for
12 them to have a stake in the process and at the
13 same time to help make sure that such policies as
14 deporting people who have served in the armed
15 forces after they have served can be avoided. If
16 the City of New York puts its money backing up
17 immigrant integration in the future I think these
18 things can be prevented.

19 DR. FRITZ FILS-AIME: I just want
20 to add very quickly that one of the first actions
21 is like right now HAUP is in dire financial
22 straits right now. It's an icon in the Haitian
23 community. And maybe there's something that the
24 Council can begin to take a look at to help this
25 organization. For instance, because familiarity

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2 is something that already breeds interest and
3 always breed interaction. Haitian people know
4 Haitian-Americans United for Progress. They're in
5 very dire financial straits where they could
6 actually close. That's something that's very,
7 very serious. Second, in the media, I know we
8 have local papers, et cetera, but we need to
9 elevate the approach to media. We need New York
10 One and we need the Daily News. I was very
11 successful with partnering up with the Daily News
12 and City Harvest over the holidays where Haitian-
13 American Veterans Association was part of the City
14 Harvest, the collection of canned foods. What it
15 represented to me was what the Haitian community
16 can give back to the larger society. Not what the
17 larger society can do for us because we have
18 professionals; we have people of substance in our
19 community that can give something back. We need
20 to organize them. We need to find things like
21 Daily News and 60 Minutes. We need media. We
22 need exposure. We need transparency. If there's
23 any way that this committee can help, then that is
24 one way to begin to help and then we can begin to
25 address our own problems. We are not over saying

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2 just help us, help us. We want to find ways where
3 we can partner up with organizations and the city
4 government and the state government and the United
5 States government so that we can help ourselves.

6 JOCELYN MCCALLA: I'm actually a
7 result of two Haitian citizens who came to America
8 and overstayed their visas. My mother and my
9 father both overstayed their visas until they were
10 able to get their green cards and eventually
11 become citizens. The reason I say this is because
12 I think that one of the areas that we as a whole
13 need to penetrate is the church community.
14 Although they didn't have status in America, they
15 were very involved in their church and the
16 community. I believe that by sharing this story
17 to many others that are here that have these
18 issues they can have a sense of hope, a sense of
19 if they were able to do it then we can do it too.
20 At the end of the day, me and my brothers and
21 sisters and cousins, we all enjoy the benefits of
22 being United States citizens, being able to
23 graduate from universities and being able to live
24 out the American dream only because our parents
25 were able to leave Haiti and come here. Yes, they

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2 were undocumented. Yes, they did not enjoy the
3 benefits but they were able to overcome that
4 struggle so that their children and their
5 grandchildren can enjoy the freedoms that they
6 didn't enjoy. I believe it really hits home
7 through the community. Yesterday we were at the
8 Community Board 17 award ceremony. We always say
9 government is local but that's where it starts is
10 at the block associations and community boards.
11 If we can penetrate them and trickle down the
12 information and show them that they can do it as
13 well. New York City I believe is one of the most
14 diverse cities in the world. We embrace people
15 who don't necessarily have it all together, if
16 everyone understands that. I feel that by
17 penetrating the community where people love to be
18 involved. People love to be given tasks to help
19 the community. By penetrating the block
20 associations, the community boards I believe that
21 we can make a change in pushing the TPS and
22 different agendas.

23 GUY SANSARICQ: What the Haitian
24 community needs to really come forward is legal
25 status. I have been told that 30% of the

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2 engineers in the New York Metropolitan subway
3 system are Haitians. Haitian doctors are the
4 largest group of black doctors in hospitals of the
5 City of New York. I have a young lady, a very,
6 very smart, beautiful young girl and she was
7 brought here at the age of three or four. She's
8 an orphan. She was brought here by somebody who
9 loved her. Now she's of college age and I had to
10 pay for college for her because she doesn't have
11 papers and she cannot really accede to higher
12 education but she's still pursuing it. Legal
13 status and the people will succeed. Regarding
14 help to Haiti, very frequently people are happy
15 with sending relief help. What we need is
16 building of infrastructure and reforestation. We
17 need investments not simply sending food. Sending
18 food, they eat it and then it's over. They
19 develop a complex of dependency. You need
20 investments in Haiti. Structural efforts to
21 develop production, industrial and agricultural
22 production, this is the type of help that is
23 needed at the moment. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: Have you ever
25 heard about SIGS [phonetic]? That is legislation

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2 that was passed in the federal government to help
3 children. You mentioned that person who came here
4 as an orphan at 3-years-old. Somehow that child
5 should not be allowed to age out. That child
6 should be one who should benefit from that
7 program. If you know of anyone who is here
8 without their parents and they're living with
9 someone, maybe a grandparent or in ACS program or
10 any one of those programs, they might be able to
11 exploit that program to become documented before
12 they age out. I think they age out at about 14
13 and a half or 15. So if they're here before that
14 and they meet the requirement I think they can
15 benefit from that program. As far as stats are
16 concerned, you mentioned about military and
17 veterans. The veterans who have been deported,
18 not only to Haiti but to other countries, if you
19 have any stats on that I would like to know
20 because we may have to look into that and maybe do
21 a hearing specifically on veteran deportees. We
22 may have to do that. Four years ago we did a
23 couple on things like that. Two cases that come
24 to mind is folks who have been deported even
25 though they were veterans. They had served in the

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2 military. They were deported for something that
3 was somewhat minor. If you know of any stats on
4 veterans who have been deported, please bring that
5 to my attention. I would like to know so that we
6 can meet on that. At this I will call on Council
7 Member Eugene.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you
9 very much, Mr. Chair. I just want to echo what
10 Bishop Sansaricq just said. The problem of Haiti
11 cannot be resolved overnight. This is a very
12 deep, complex situation. Sending food is good.
13 This is immediate intervention. But the problem
14 is so complex. I remember that I went to
15 Washington to make a presentation before the U.S.
16 Congress. One of my questions before I went to
17 Washington that I asked of President Preval and
18 his answers was similar to what Bishop Sansaricq
19 said. We need infrastructure. Even when we send
20 the food to Haiti he said that it was impossible
21 to bring the food from one food to the other point
22 because they had no bridge and no road. Right now
23 I'm working together with certain members of the
24 Congress to figure out how we can work together to
25 help Haiti. One week ago there was a

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2 congressional delegation that went to Haiti to do
3 a survey. They spoke with President Preval and
4 the members of the Haitian community. We are
5 going to have a public forum on Friday at 6:30.
6 They are going to give a report of what they are
7 planning to do for Haiti. They will also take
8 questions from the audience. You are invited. As
9 a matter of fact, I've started working with
10 Secretary Clinton and also Chuck Schumer and many
11 members of the Congress. We are thinking about
12 rebuilding infrastructure in Haiti. And try to
13 get Haiti back to agriculture because we used to
14 feed the people. We used to export food. We are
15 thinking about building a hospital and school for
16 the children. But it will take time. It's going
17 to take the effort and the collaboration of
18 Haitian people, the American government, the
19 Haitian government, everybody together. I think
20 that you are right Bishop Sansaricq. This is a
21 moral obligation of all of us to come together to
22 see if we can take Haiti from the situation it is
23 right now.

24 CHAIRPERSON STEWART: Before we
25 close I would like to ask William to give us the

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final vote on the resolution.

WILLIAM MARTIN: The final vote on Resolution 1595-A now stands at six in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON STEWART: I want to thank each one of you for coming in and giving testimony on this important issue. Now that it has been passed, we are going to take it to the Council and hope that we will vote on it on the next stated meeting so that we can send this to Washington, D.C. to make sure that Haiti is placed on the list to be granted temporary protected status. I hope that we will be able to come up with a comprehensive immigration plan even before we finalize that. I know that President Obama with just a stroke of a pen should be able to do that and put things in place and not only stop the deportation but also stop the raids and stop the treatment of immigrants in a negative way. Then we can bring folks that have been hiding out in the open and folks can stay with their family and be able to make this city and the state and the country a better place to live. Once again, I

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want to thank each one of you for coming in. We

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call this meeting adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Donna Hintze, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature *Donna Hintze*

Date May 7, 2009