



**A Catholic Campaign
Against Global Poverty**



Take Action!

October 13, 2006

Help Haiti: Urge your Representative to Write in Support of Haiti Trade Preferences

TAKE ACTION NOW! Contact your Representative urging support for the Haiti trade preferences in H.R. 6142 and asking him or her to write a letter to House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-14/IL) and Majority Leader John Boehner (R-8/OH) urging them to bring H.R. 6142 up for a vote as soon as Congress reconvenes after the congressional elections on November 7th. H.R. 6142 contains the *Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act of 2006* that provides trade preferences for Haiti's weakened textile industry.

Visit the CRS Action Center to send your Member a message today: <http://actioncenter.crs.org> specifically asking them to write to House leadership. Please ask your Member to share a copy of the support letter that he or she may write. It is vital that we know your Member's request to House leadership to bring the bill to the floor so that we can urge swift passage of the bill when Congress returns on November 13th. There is a danger that the needs of Haiti will be overshadowed by other congressional priorities.

WHY THIS ISSUE IS IMPORTANT: The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have been urging Congress to pass trade preferences for Haiti for some time. (See <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/HaitilettertoAmbPortman2006Final.pdf>). Our advocacy efforts have now reached a critical stage.

In September, Rep. William Thomas (R-22/CA), Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, introduced H.R. 6142, which contains the HOPE Act. The HOPE Act will attract investment in Haiti and create jobs for thousands of Haitians. USCCB and CRS are urging Congress to bring H.R. 6142 up for a vote as soon as Congress reconvenes after the elections. Visit <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2006/06-187.shtml> for a copy of a letter the USCCB recently sent to all Representatives urging swift passage of the HOPE Act.

BACKGROUND: In support of our mission to follow the Gospel's call to alleviate human suffering and promote justice worldwide, USCCB and CRS are promoting the *Catholic Campaign Against Global Poverty* www.usccb.org/globalpoverty. Our campaign is rooted in our Church's teaching to uphold human dignity, by shaping U.S. policies and programs to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people around the world. The campaign has three major pillars: debt relief, effective foreign assistance and promoting an equitable international trade system.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. CRS has been working in Haiti since 1954 assisting the people during natural disasters and political crises and also focusing on long term development through education, health, small business development and agricultural programming. While USCCB and CRS believe foreign aid and debt relief are critical, they are inadequate for tackling Haiti's interlinked problems. With a newly-elected President and a reduction in violence, Haiti needs long-term economic development to create jobs for the poor, leading to stability. Without sustained development though jobs and economic growth, there are fears that Haiti will turn into a permanent failed state, becoming a haven for drug transshipment and terrorism.

The HOPE Act, contained in H.R. 6142, will offer a much-needed economic boost to Haiti by providing preferential access to Haitian exports. Haiti once had a vibrant textile industry but thousands of manufacturing jobs have been lost in recent years. Factories are now closed and machinery lies dormant. With trade preferences, these factories could open up very quickly offering short and long term job opportunities for Haitians. Enforced properly, many experts agree that trade preferences for Haiti present no threat to the U.S. textile industry.

Visit <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/haiti2006.htm> for more information.

TAKE ACTION NOW! Once again, visit the CRS Action Center (<http://actioncenter.crs.org/>) today to contact your Member and ask him or her to write urging House leadership to bring H.R. 6142 up for a vote as soon as Congress reconvenes after the congressional elections. Don't forget to ask for a copy of the letter to House leadership! Contact Fr. Andrew Small or Tina Rodousakis to let us know what response you received.

For more information, contact:

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