



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Committee on
International Justice
and Peace

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December 11, 2024

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate

The Honorable Jason Smith
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives

RE: Extension of the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) and the Haiti Economic Lift Program (HELP) Acts

Dear Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Crapo, Chairman Smith, and Ranking Member Neal,

Be assured of my prayers for you and your families during this holiday season.

As you know, Haiti is experiencing a series of devastating social, political, and economic crises, exacerbated, and, to a degree, caused, by unsustainable levels of politically motivated gang violence. Even as efforts to restore Haitian national security continue—toward which the United States is committing considerable funding and advising assistance, especially for the crucially important Multinational Security Support Mission—it is imperative that our country strengthens the sources of economic opportunity that remain for the Haitian people. Congress should pass the Haiti Economic Lift Program Extension Act of 2023 (H.R. 5614 S.552), extending the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) and the Haiti Economic Lift Program (HELP) Acts, hopefully before the end of 2024, to enable the country's continuation of economically vital manufacturing and export operations.

The social and economic development of Haitian civil society—severely imperiled by gang violence and economic uncertainty—is the only path toward the attainment and consolidation of long-term political stability in the country. Affording Haitian imports preferential treatment constitutes a strong gesture of solidarity with our Haitian brothers and sisters, while also empowering Haiti's local economic capacity. Furthermore, these legislative/trade acts have contributed to the development in Haiti of more secure legal/institutional foundations for ongoing mutually beneficial trade/commercial relations with the United States; this is bilateral collaborative social and political development at its best.

If you consider it helpful, my staff and I are available to discuss more extensively.

Sincerely,

The Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan
Bishop of Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace