

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 13, 2015

COMMITTEES:  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND  
TRANSPORTATION  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Secretary John Kerry  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I am writing to express my concern about recent developments in the Dominican Republic, involving Dominican-born individuals of Haitian descent.

As you know, on September 23, 2013, the Dominican Republic's constitutional court issued a controversial ruling, which rescinded citizenship previously granted to many residents of the Dominican Republic with Haitian heritage. The court issued a ruling that retroactively stripped citizenship from the children of parents who were not "legal residents" at the time of their birth. This ruling was made on the basis that their parents were "in transit" and not residing in the Dominican Republic.

The ruling stated that as a result, the children of the parents "in transit", and subsequent generations born on Dominican soil, are excluded from the citizenship guarantee provided by the Dominican constitution. This has effectively stripped citizenship from the descendants of Haitian migrants who have settled in the Dominican Republic for over 80 years. The vast majority of these individuals will be left stateless if this ruling is enforced. Tens of thousands of people have reportedly left the Dominican Republic voluntarily and face an uncertain fate in Haiti, where they lack ties and Haitian authorities have not had the resources to assist them.

While the Dominican government has begun the process of registering both Haitians born in the Dominican Republic and adults who have immigrated to the Dominican Republic in a program referred to as "regularization," there are large numbers of persons of Haitian descent who lack any documentation to prove their nationality.

Therefore, I respectfully ask that you work with the Dominican government to ensure that the registration process for Dominicans of Haitian descent is fair and inclusive of those born in the country and provides them with the opportunity to live in the Dominican Republic. I also ask that you work with the Government of Haiti to ensure those who decide to return to that country are treated humanely and receive appropriate assistance. It is important that all individuals who are affected by this ruling are afforded all their rights as citizens of either the Dominican Republic or Haiti and that no one is left stateless.

It is also important that the United States continue to support the people of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and I look forward to your updates on your outreach to both governments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that appear to read 'MR' followed by a long horizontal line.

Marco Rubio  
United States Senator