

WILLIAM LEHMAN
13TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE:
APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN OPERATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2440 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4211

DISTRICT OFFICE:
2020 NE. 163D STREET
NORTH MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA 33162
(305) 945-7518
PLEASE REPLY TO DISTRICT OFFICE

May 10, 1979

Honorable Griffin Bell
Attorney General of the United States
Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

In November, 1977, the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the National Council of Churches reached an agreement which resulted in the issuing of work permits to thousands of Haitians in South Florida.

Although the intent of the agreement was to provide permits to those Haitians awaiting asylum proceedings, the Miami District Office spread the word that all Haitians should report to the INS to receive work authorizations. Three thousand previously undetected Haitians reported to the INS. At about the same time, hundreds of Haitians were forced out of the Bahamas and came to Florida. This combination of circumstances led the INS to wrongly conclude that the work permits were merely attracting more Haitians to Florida. The Department of Justice therefore ordered a halt to the liberal work authorization policy. At the present time, work permits are granted only in rare cases.

I am writing to urge you to once again allow those Haitians awaiting final determination of their political asylum claims to have work permits. Allowing them to work would lessen the financial burden on Dade County, which is spending a large amount of money to provide basic services to Haitians who have no sources of income and are ineligible for Federal assistance.

There should be no adverse effects on the local labor market. The South Florida CETA Consortium has stated that a sufficient number of hard-to-fill entry level jobs exist to absorb the number of Haitians who would seek such work. The Consortium has further stated that "this assimilation could be accomplished with little or no adverse effect upon the current Miami SMSA Labor Market."

Honorable Griffin Bell
May 10, 1979
Page Two

The process of reaching a decision on the political asylum claims of the Haitians will undoubtedly take a long time. During this waiting period, these persons should be allowed to support themselves if they are able and willing to work.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to a favorable response.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

WILLIAM LEHMAN
Member of Congress

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