

E. CLAY SHAW
16th DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE
WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEES:
OVERSIGHT
HUMAN RESOURCES
RANKING MEMBER

URGENT: VOTE TODAY



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0915

November 25, 1991

REPLY TO:
U.S. HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0915
(202) 225-2000
DISTRICT OFFICE:
1612 EAST BROADWAY BOULEVARD
SUITE 101
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301
(305) 622-1800

Dear Colleague:

Events unfolding in Haiti are truly heart-rending. The plight of Haitians in the wake of the coup that deposed President Aristide has touched us all. Our hearts go out to the thousands who have fled their homeland, setting off by the boatload for South Florida. Since October 29, Coast Guard cutters have intercepted 3137 Haitians trying to reach the United States.

During that same time hundreds, perhaps thousands, of others have died trying.

Just this past Tuesday, an estimated 135 Haitians drowned when their boat capsized off the coast of Cuba. The State Department estimates that half of Haitians fleeing to the United States do not reach our shores. Half.

We, as Members of the Florida congressional delegation think that any court order, policy decision, or legislation that encourages Haitians to take to the seas by the thousands is simply an outrage. It is a moral outrage because so many Haitians have and will continue to die with the false hope of reaching our shores.

It is also an outrage because Florida simply cannot absorb another mass influx of refugees. Make no mistake -- Florida residents alone would bear the overwhelming social and financial consequences of admitting thousands of new refugees to our state.

Legislation holding out the hope of temporary admission for Haitians may reach the floor of the House tonight. We urge you to consider the signal your vote will send to thousands of desperate Haitians.

Let's work together to reinstate President Aristide and restore order to Haiti. We must not, however, contribute to the senseless slaughter of Haitians by condoning a reckless and short-sighted reversal in immigration policy.

Sincerely,

Bill McCollum
Bill McCollum

Clay Shaw
Clay Shaw

Tom Lewis
Tom Lewis

Sam Gibbons
Sam Gibbons

Earl Hutto
Earl Hutto

Mike Bilirakis
Michael Bilirakis