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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

February 27, 1992

VOTE NO ON H.R. 3844

Dear Colleague:

Today we will be voting on a bill, H.R. 3844, that would stop repatriation of Haitian boat people who have been interviewed by the INS asylum officers and found to have no credible claim to asylum.

If the House votes to stop repatriating non-refugees, we will be encouraging other Haitians to leave Haiti in the hope that they eventually will be brought to the United States.

All Haitians who are picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard are carefully screened to determine whether they are refugees. INS currently has 24 teams at Guantanamo Naval Base; each team is composed of a trained asylum officer and a creole-speaking interpreter. Each Haitian is asked in an individual, confidential interview to explain in detail why they left Haiti, if they fear returning, and if so, why in particular they believe they would be harmed if they were to return.

So far, 15,300 Haitians have been interviewed, of whom 5,200 or 34%, have been screened in. Members of this group are being screened for health-related problems, given work authorization, and paroled into the United States to pursue their asylum claims.

NOTE WELL → Haitian refugees are protected by the current procedures. Many other Haitians, however, are not fleeing from Haiti so much as they are fleeing to the United States, as is evidenced by the absence of large refugee movements across the open border into the Dominican Republic and by the preference of many to return to Haiti from other countries once it becomes clear they will not be allowed to proceed to the United States.

We need to continue to follow our refugee and immigration laws, as our government currently is doing. H.R. 3844 would prevent that and should, therefore, be defeated. Vote NO on H.R. 3844.

Sincerely,

George Allen
Member of Congress

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