

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 13, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We, a bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers, write to urge you both to continue to operate an independent office within the State Department dedicated to aiding and assisting Haiti and to continue to provide strong support to the Haitian people. We have worked closely with the Haiti Special Coordinator and his office over the last several years and want to ensure that a State Department office solely dedicated to Haiti continues in the years ahead.

Haiti is a resilient country that tragically has been impacted by numerous natural and manmade disasters over the past few years alone. In 2010, Haiti was hit by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that killed hundreds of thousands of people, displaced over one million Haitians, and caused more than \$7.5 billion in property damage, which is more than Haiti's entire 2010 GDP. The cholera epidemic in Haiti has killed more than 10,000 people and is but one of several infectious diseases impacting the people of Haiti. Hurricane Matthew also struck Haiti on October 4th, 2016 killing more than 1,000 Haitians, displacing more than 140,000 people, and causing more than \$1 billion in property damage. These events have created unique challenges that require designated State Department staff to coordinate relief to the Western Hemisphere's most distressed economy.

Following the 2010 earthquake, President Obama established the Office of the Special Coordinator for Haiti to address that country's specific development needs. In its short history, this office has played a crucial role in coordinating \$4.6 billion in humanitarian and post-reconstruction relief, supported the peaceful transition of power in Haiti, and served as a trusted liaison to Congress.

Haiti is now caught in a moment of transition. It has a new president, has made some economic progress since the 2010 earthquake, and is taking steps to address the impact of the cholera epidemic and Hurricane Matthew. It is therefore all the more important to maintain this progress and institutional knowledge at this critical juncture.

For these reasons, we urge you to continue to have an independent office dedicated to Haiti at the State Department in the years ahead. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the United States continues to be a reliable partner and friend to the Haitian people.

Sincerely,



Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



Mia Love  
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel

Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
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Gregory W. Meeks

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Frederica S. Wilson

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John Conyers, Jr.

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Debbie Wasserman Schultz

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Theodore E. Deutch  
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Nita M. Lowey

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Member of Congress