



SR0802

LRB099 13234 GRL 37139 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Generations of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic have experienced systematic discrimination and inhumane treatment, including being trafficked into the country to perform back-breaking labor in its sugarcane fields for little or no compensation in a system that has been characterized as modern-day slavery; the Dominican Republic's Haitian population has also faced escalating threats to its safety this year through anti-Haitian protests and violence, including the lynching of a Haitian man in a public park; and

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WHEREAS, Throughout this shameful history, during which many Dominicans and the Dominican Republic as a whole have benefitted economically from the low cost labor of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, the establishment of barriers to legal Dominican citizenship for Haitian migrants and their children, even those born in the Dominican Republic, has remained a constant; in 2010, an amendment to the Dominican Constitution removed its birthright citizenship provision and instantaneously denationalized hundreds of thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent born to immigrants subsequent to 1929; and

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WHEREAS, In 2013, the Constitutional Court of the Dominican

1 Republic applied this amendment retroactively, effectively  
2 revoking the citizenship of people born in the Dominican  
3 Republic to noncitizens; subsequent to this decision, the  
4 government of the Dominican Republic required all migrants and  
5 non-citizens to prove that they arrived in the country prior to  
6 October of 2011 and to either have a job or be attending school  
7 or else face deportation; and

8 WHEREAS, By the government's deadline on June 17, 2015,  
9 many men, women, and children of Haitian descent had been  
10 unable to register to remain in the country because of a lack  
11 of access to formal documentation of their place of birth, date  
12 of arrival in the Dominican Republic, work status, or other  
13 required information; although the deadline has been extended,  
14 an estimated 40,000 persons, fearing sudden deportation,  
15 separation from family members, and the loss of their  
16 belongings, have already left the Dominican Republic for Haiti,  
17 where many lack employment and housing and where the sudden  
18 population increase is contributing to the lingering  
19 humanitarian crisis in that nation; and

20 WHEREAS, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
21 estimates that more than 200,000 of those affected by the  
22 actions of the Dominican government are now not legally  
23 citizens of either Haiti or the Dominican Republic and are thus  
24 relegated to statelessness, putting the Dominican Republic in

1 violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to  
2 which the Dominican Republic and the United States are  
3 signatories and which states, "No one shall be arbitrarily  
4 deprived of his nationality"; and

5 WHEREAS, In 2005, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights  
6 ordered the government of the Dominican Republic to issue birth  
7 certificates to all Dominican-born children, since residents  
8 without birth certificates cannot legally attend public  
9 school, marry, own property, or vote; however, the Dominican  
10 Republic has failed to comply with this ruling and has declared  
11 itself no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the court; and

12 WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of residents of the  
13 Dominican Republic are still at risk of deportation at a  
14 moment's notice; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL  
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the government  
17 of the United States to bring pressure to bear on the Dominican  
18 Republic, using means including sanctions, travel bans, or  
19 other tools that leverage the Dominican government's  
20 dependence on foreign trade and tourism, to immediately halt  
21 any and all discriminatory deportations of Haitians living in  
22 the Dominican Republic and Dominicans of Haitian descent,  
23 comply with international law, and treat all of its residents

1 fairly and humanely, regardless of color, national origin,  
2 migration status, or native language; and be it further

3       RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
4 delivered to President Barack Obama, the members of the  
5 Illinois congressional delegation, Secretary of State John  
6 Kerry, and Ambassador Samantha Power.