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Obama admin. to allow thousands of Haitians into U.S. without visas

By [Douglas Ernst](#) - *The Washington Times* - Friday, October 17, 2014

The ranking Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee took the Obama administration to task Friday for its "irresponsible" plan to allow as many as 100,000 Haitians to immigrate to the U.S. without a visa.

Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa said the administration's Haitian Family Reunification Parole Program — which will allow thousands of Haitians awaiting a U.S. visa to enter the country and legally apply for work permits — is "an irresponsible overreach of the executive branch's authority."

"Which countries are next on President Obama's list?" Mr. Grassley said. "Will there be medical screenings before entry? Will work permits be granted automatically? How will this affect American workers?"

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the branch of the Department of Homeland Security that handles immigration benefits cases, [announced Friday](#) the program to unite Haitians already living in the U.S. with family members abroad will ramp up in 2015.

At that time the State Department's National Visa Center will begin notifying families who may be eligible to take part in the program. Those immigrants will be allowed to apply for work permits while waiting for issuance of their permanent visas.

The agency said the program will expedite "safe, legal and orderly migration."

"The rebuilding and development of a safe and economically strong Haiti is a priority for the United States. The Haitian Family Reunification Parole program promotes a fundamental underlying goal of our immigration system — family reunification," said Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas. "It also supports broader U.S. goals for Haiti's reconstruction and development by providing the opportunity for certain eligible Haitians to safely and legally immigrate sooner to the United States."

Roughly 100,000 Haitians already approved to come to the U.S. are currently awaiting visas, The

Associated Press reported.

Mr. Grassley, whose Senate committee has jurisdiction over immigration policy, predicted the number of Haitians who would come to the U.S. under the program would likely exceed that estimate, calling it "likely just the beginning of the president's unilateral and executive actions on immigration."

"Parole is meant for humanitarian assistance on a case-by-case basis," he said. "The president's continued push to circumvent Congressional authority and ignore the rule of law sets a bad precedent for the future."

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