

Dear Representative,

We, the undersigned development, human rights and faith-based organizations, are writing to express our strong support for H.R. 1749, the [Assessing Progress in Haiti Act](#), introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on April 26th by Representative Barbara Lee of California. More than three years after Haiti's devastating earthquake, we note that there is still far too little transparency and accountability around U.S. relief and reconstruction aid efforts. We believe that this legislation will greatly assist Congress in overseeing U.S. assistance in Haiti by providing lawmakers, as well as the US public, and Haitian communities in Haiti with key details on the manner in which U.S. taxpayer money is being spent.

The Assessing Progress in Haiti Act mandates the development of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that will chart the progress of the U.S. government's Post-Earthquake Haiti Strategy thus far. Previous reports, required under the FY2010 Supplemental for Wars, Disaster Assistance, Haiti Relief and other programs, have been inadequate and provide little insight into the flow and effectiveness of U.S. assistance to Haiti. [H.R. 1749](#) contains a number of pointed and specific reporting requirements that would allow the more rigorous and objective lens of the GAO to provide a more comprehensive and thorough examination of the US government assistance to Haiti.

Among other highlights, this legislation would:

- Examine how obligated funds have been used by USAID and its implementing partners at both the prime and subprime level;
- Detail existing goals and quantitative and qualitative indicators that USAID is applying at the program level and examine whether goals are being met;
- Assess how the State Department and USAID are working with Haitian authorities and consulting Haitian grassroots organizations in the design and implementation of aid programs;
- Assess efforts to include the Haitian private sector in recovery and development programs;
- Assess whether vulnerable populations, including Internally Displaced Populations, women, children, orphans, and persons with disabilities have been taken into account in the design and implementation of new programs;
- Assess how USAID programs are impacting the livelihoods of smallholder farmers that are crucial to Haiti's economy; and
- Examine the U.S. government's efforts to address Haiti's deadly cholera epidemic.

This additional scrutiny of U.S. aid efforts is warranted. Two Washington-based think tanks have recently published studies outlining the need for greater transparency and accountability around U.S. assistance to Haiti. In a [February 2013 report](#), the Center for Global Development noted that "organizations delivering relief efforts in Haiti are operating with little oversight and no clear guidelines for baseline measurement, reporting, or evaluation standards." The Center for Economic and Policy Research, in an [April 2013 report](#), explained that the few audits of U.S. post-quake assistance to Haiti present a "troubling picture" that show "a lack of effective oversight and a failure to meet, or even apply, basic benchmarks."

Haitians continue to face tremendous challenges, and ensuring that U.S. assistance to Haiti is delivered efficiently is more essential than ever. There are approximately 320,000 people still living in tent camps, many of whom are facing forced evictions. More disquieting, many more have left the camps to live in temporary, inadequate, and often dangerous housing conditions, with no clear pathway to safe and decent housing in the foreseeable future. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians have little or no access to potable water or basic health services, and Haiti is facing an impending food crisis according to local and international organizations, and the government of Haiti. Cholera has killed 8,100 Haitians and sickened over 654,000 since it was first introduced to Haiti in October of 2010. Meanwhile, as a January [New York Times editorial](#) pointed out, “the flood of aid has slowed to a trickle; much of what was promised was never delivered or remains undisbursed (...) Money for long-term recovery has proved hard to spend, or slow to show results.”

We respectfully request that you co-sponsor this legislation and urge you to act quickly to help ensure its approval by the House of Representatives. Already too much time has passed without adequate scrutiny of our country’s aid efforts in Haiti. Greater openness and a focus on accountability have been cornerstones of the new reforms at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and we believe this bill would further those basic goals.

Sincerely,



ActionAid USA – American Jewish World Service – Center for Gender & Refugee Studies – Church World Service – Environmental Justice Initiative for Haiti – GenderAction – Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law (this letter does not represent the institutional views of NYU School of Law) – Government Accountability Project – Grassroots International – Haiti Adolescent Girl Network/Rezo Akyson Pou Fi Ayisyen – Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti – Li, Li, Li! – MADRE – Mennonite Central Committee, U.S. Washington Office – Other Worlds – Partners in Health – The Episcopal Church – The Haiti Support Group – TransAfrica Forum – Unitarian Universalist Service Committee – United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society – Women Thrive

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