



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jesse Hamilton

Senator Jesse Hamilton Joins Brooklyn Elected Leaders and Human Rights Advocates in Solidarity with Dominicans of Haitian Descent

JESSE HAMILTON June 26, 2015

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(Brooklyn, NY – June 26, 2015) This afternoon, Senator Jesse Hamilton joined Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams, New York City Council Member Mathieu Eugene, 51st Assembly District Leader Arelis Martinez, clergy and human rights advocates on the steps of Brooklyn Borough Hall for a press conference and rally in solidarity with Dominicans of Haitian descent threatened by deportation from the Dominican Republic. In his remarks

Senator Hamilton emphasized the importance of finding common ground and demonstrating how we can work together to advance human rights.

Common themes across the speeches included dignity and respect for Dominicans of Haitian descent and advancing the cause of human dignity in partnership with one another.

Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams announced a letter to the parties, in an effort to catalyze a resolution to the issue. BP Adams said that any resolution starts with a conversation. Making a parallel with the situation faced by undocumented migrants to NYC, BP Adams said that we have to create pathways out of shadows. He added that he hoped to push the conversation forward, showing how Brooklyn can lead the way in being part of the solution

New York City Council Member Mathieu Eugene emphasized the point that many US residents can trace their origins to one or several countries. He underscored the contributions all of us make to keeping our city strong. He further highlighted the point that this is a human rights crisis. He made the point that the fact of people being deported is a long story of many places, calling it a human phenomenon. He said that we have to stand together to fight against this discrimination. We have to stand against discrimination everywhere.

Pastor Herbert Daughtry raised the moral imperative. He raised US history, and the role that Haiti played in prompting France to offer the Louisiana Purchase to the early US – saying that we owe Haiti and the Haitian people. On the deportations, Pastor Daughtry called them a moral outrage. Also addressing Dominican leaders, he said we should join together and say there must be a better way.

51st Assembly District Leader Arelis Martinez, Dominican herself, emphasized the need for working together in an effort to bring a solution this problem, and further fighting for the right solution.

The representative from Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, Sophia Cantave, focused her remarks on dignity and respect. She expressed concerns about ethnic cleansing, the targeting of those of Haitian descent, and those who “look Haitian.” She called for steps to demonstrate that defying the Inter-American Court of Human Rights would not stand, including boycotts, saying no to tourism, and not sending money – particularly because of the targeting of people because they are black.

TWU Local 100 representatives, Raybbilin Vargas and Emmanuella Mathurin, focused on the importance of standing together to fight and standing together to make sure there are policy changes. The representatives of TWU said, “when they are hungry, I am hungry,” and further that “an injury to one is an injury to all.” They also highlighted the contradiction in the idea that one could support Dreamers in the US while approving of deportations of Dominicans of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, adding that she would not stand on the backs of the African Diaspora, nor would she balance paycheck books on racism.

Dweynie Paul from the Haitian American Lawyers Association of New York said with unity we have strength and force. She said this issue was both a human rights issue as well as a civil rights issue. She highlighted that generations of people were born, raised, educated and nurtured in the Dominican Republic and were now being told something akin to “It’s over.” She closed by saying it is imperative that we stand together.

Senator Hamilton closed the press conference by thanking everyone and calling for continued engagement by way of petition signatures and volunteer.

WhiteHouse.gov Petition: "Pressure the government of the Dominican Republic to stop its planned "cleaning" of 250,000 black Dominicans."

(Photo Credit: Andrea Karshan)