

Three Suggestions for Haitians Given the New Trump Administration

Trump has threatened to deport millions of immigrants but lacks the resources to do so, so people should definitely not panic, but three general suggestions seem wise. First, it would be wise to know your basic legal rights (see next paragraph). Secondly, unless you have some form of permanent legal status in the United States, it would be wise to promptly, as soon as possible, consult a competent and experienced legal services or private attorney to review your immigration situation and possible legal options. [Find legal advice near where you live](#). Thirdly, if you have dependents, it always makes sense to have a plan for their welfare just in case something happens to you.

First, although Trump lacks the resources for wide-scale ICE raids on workplaces and homes, ICE will do some and they will get headlines, so it would be wise to know what your rights are just in case you encounter an ICE agent. If you do, you have the legal rights 1) to remain silent, 2) to consult an attorney immediately, and, importantly, 3) not to sign anything! See [this](#) excellent compendium of resources on this subject going into much more detail.¹

Secondly, unless you have some form of permanent legal status, you would be wise to consult an experienced and competent immigration attorney as soon as possible about any forms of immigration relief which may be appropriate for you, whether the attorney is in private practice or at one of the many established agencies like Catholic Charities Legal Services and the many others which provide competent legal advice for free or at low-cost. (Definitely avoid scam artists who will take your money, aren't authorized to give legal advice, and may file bad applications or give you wrong legal advice which may permanently damage your legal rights!) [Find legal advice near where you live](#).

Thirdly, it's always wise for anyone, whether a U.S. citizen or immigrant, to plan for who will be legally responsible for their minor children and/or other dependents if they are incapacitated due to a bad accident, illness, death, or by their possible deportation.² Ask for advice and explore available options in your city and state.

Questions about any of these suggestions may be addressed to Steve Forester, Immigration Policy Coordinator, IJDH steveforester@aol.com. Email is preferred, but you may also try texting, being sure to please identify yourself, to 786 877 6999.)

¹ If ICE questions you, for example, you can remain silent; you are not required to give your address, your home country, or (in many states) even your name; you don't have to open the door, etc

² In addition to exploring the various legal options which vary from state to state, you can prepare a list of emergency phone numbers; let your children's school know who can pick them up in case you're not able to do so; etc.