

From: [Arellano, Joey](#)
To: [FLHouseDems](#)
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Rep. Joseph Implores the Florida DCF to Keep Baby Ector in the United States
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**Representative Dotie Joseph Implores the Florida
Department of Children and Families to Keep Baby Ector in
the United States**

MIAMI – State Representative Dotie Joseph (D-Miami) wrote to **Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Shevaun Harris** earlier imploring that baby Ector, who is a U.S. citizen, remain in the United States and afforded full due process pending a thorough assessment of what permanent placement is in the best interest of this child.

The baby is currently placed in a seemingly safe foster home. Based on the information available, the proposed “change in physical custody” to a relative with no steady income, no running water, and is in an area that is far from a hospital, suffering crisis level food shortages, and riddled with well documented insecurity. To the extent there is an outstanding issue with any paternal rights, that should be resolved so that a full assessment of available placement options can be evaluated to keep the child “safe and stable” based on the factors a “best interest determination for [permanent] placement.”

“Baby Ector is an American citizen, and as such, is entitled to due process under the law. The State Department has warned U.S. citizens not to go to Haiti and has been proactively advising Americans in the country to depart Haiti in light of the ongoing insecurity and deteriorating health situation. To be clear, I am not advocating for this or any child to be automatically offered up for adoption when Haiti or any other country facing troubles is at play, but I am highlighting the current situation in the country as compared to his current seemingly safe stable placement. I implore a proper assessment of what would be in his best interests based on the statutory factors for achieving permanency. Based on the facts presented in this article, his safety and stability are unquestionably a concern. Rather than rushing the child to Haiti, I am asking that DCF afford baby Ector the due process to which he is entitled and keep him in the United States pending such a determination.”

Representative Joseph’s letter to DCF can be viewed [here](#).

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