

TRIP REPORT:  
**HAITI**  
OCTOBER 2011



On October 10, 2011, a delegation from the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) traveled to Haiti for its first meeting with members of the new Haitian National Assembly. The 10-Member delegation was led by HDP Chairman David Dreier (R-CA) and included HDP Members Lois Capps (D-CA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Gwen Moore (D-WI), and Susan Davis, as well as Donald Payne (D-NJ), Maxine Waters (D-CA), Adam Schiff (D-CA), Donna Christensen (D-VI) and Yvette Clark (D-NY). This was HDP's fourth congressional delegation to Haiti since 2007, fourth delegation of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress and 25<sup>th</sup> overall.

Following the devastating earthquake that struck Port-au-Prince in January 2010 and delayed the previously scheduled elections, polling took place in November 2010 and March 2011 to select all 99 members of the Chamber of Deputies and 11 of the 30 senators. This delegation met with nearly two dozen MPs to discuss key aspects of a legislator's work, including constituent relations, committee operations, and budget oversight.

After a briefing by U.S. Embassy officials at the Port-au-Prince airport, the delegation began its visit by meeting with Haitian President Michel Martelly, who was sworn in this May. Delegation members discussed a wide range of issues with the president, including the progress made toward resettling Haitians displaced by last year's earthquake, the President's initiatives in the areas of education and housing, the future of the U.N. mission in Haiti, and the role that the Haitian diaspora can play in the country's development. President Martelly emphasized his desire to work constructively with the opposition-controlled parliament, highlighting the recent confirmation of his nominee for prime minister as an example of effective cooperation.

The delegation visited the site of the interim parliament complex on the Port-au-Prince waterfront. The U.S. Agency for International Development is overseeing the construction of the \$1 million complex, expected to open before the end of 2011.

The central focus of the delegation's visit was its meetings with deputies and senators, including Sorel Jacinthe, president of the Chamber of Deputies. The session opened with a discussion on the importance of communication between legislators and their constituents. Members of Congress shared ways in which they stay in contact with their constituents and the importance of maintaining offices in their districts. The delegation then divided for small-group meetings with the Haitian MPs. Chairman Dreier led a session on the role of committees in conducting oversight of the executive, while Rep. Capps led a session with MPs from the finance committees of the Chamber and Senate about the role of the legislature in budget oversight.



*Rep. David Dreier speaks with Haitian Sen. Steven Benoit after a session.*

The delegation's visit to Port-au-Prince concluded with a meeting with newly confirmed Prime Minister Gary Conille.