

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2017

The Honorable John Kelly
Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Elaine C. Duke
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Chief of Staff Kelly and Acting Secretary Duke,

We write to strongly urge you to renew the temporary protected status (TPS) designation for Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, El Salvador, and Syria.

As you near the statutory 60-day decision date prior to a country's TPS expiration, we ask you to review each of these designations closely, taking into consideration the current conditions of each country, the contributions these TPS recipients have made to our country, and the economic impact a negative determination would have across the United States.

The people of Central America and Haiti have faced a series of disasters, including catastrophic earthquakes and hurricanes, that have left their countries devastated. In Syria, ongoing armed conflict has caused death and destruction and has left more than 6 million internally displaced.

In Honduras and Nicaragua, Hurricane Mitch caused extensive damage that destroyed roads, bridges, and agricultural plantations vital to the economy. It claimed the lives of over 10,000 people, and displaced 1.5 million people. Basic social infrastructure systems such as the health, water, and sanitation services were severely damaged and have yet to recover. In addition, violence and climate fluctuations between droughts and floods have rendered these countries unable to adequately handle a safe return of TPS recipients.

In El Salvador, a series of major quakes destroyed a quarter of the country's housing stock with economic losses amounting to 12 percent of El Salvador's GDP. Since 2001, Administrations from both parties have extended TPS for El Salvador, with the latest extension ending on March 9, 2018. Infrastructure problems related to these disasters, including lack of potable water, housing shortage, widespread hunger, and unemployment continue to permeate the region. In addition, violence continues to ravage El Salvador, hindering rebuilding efforts. For years, El Salvador has long struggled with staggering homicide rates and transnational gang activity.

In Haiti, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake displaced 1.5 million people and irreparably damaged the island's infrastructure. The outbreak of infectious diseases and continued hurricane activity have further hindered the country's ability to recover. The conditions prompting Haiti's most recent TPS extension continue to persist, including housing shortages; disease; limited access to medical care, food, and water. This year's hurricanes have inflicted damage on Haiti's infrastructure, further complicating and delaying the recovery process.

In Syria, atrocities committed by the Assad regime and the Islamic State have created the worst humanitarian crisis of our time. The sustained conflict has displaced five million Syrians from their homeland in search of safety. Forcing these individuals to return to this war zone will effectively amount to a death sentence.

Despite the substantial efforts made by the United States and the international community to improve conditions, the damage of these cataclysmic events compounded by the residual effects of disease, violence, and poverty have resulted in a stagnant recovery. Conditions simply have not sufficiently improved since the most recent extension for these countries to safely and productively reintegrate TPS recipients in their home communities.

Apart from positioning the U.S. as a humanitarian leader, extending TPS also serves our national interest by boosting our economy. According to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, TPS recipients have high-labor participation rates, ranging from 81-88 percent, 11 percent of which is self-employed. TPS recipients from these countries contribute more than \$4.5 billion dollars in pre-tax wages and \$6.1 billion in Social Security and Medicare. Terminating TPS for these countries would result in a loss of more than \$45.2 billion dollars in GDP, over the next decade.

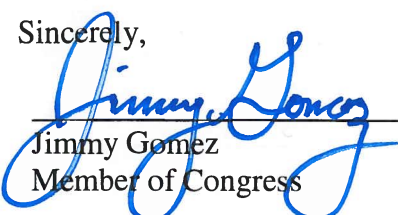
The deportation of TPS recipients would cost taxpayers \$3.1 billion dollars, \$10,070 per person. Consequently, employers would have to incur turnover cost of approximately 21.4% of an employee's yearly salary. Industries with a high concentration of TPS workers, such as, construction, landscaping, child care, and food services would experience massive layoffs. The lay-off of the entire employed TPS population from these countries would result in a more than \$967 million turnover cost for businesses.

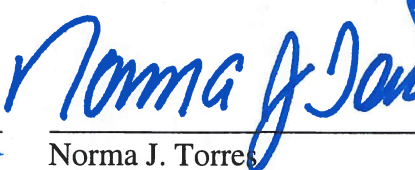
TPS recipients are hardworking contributors to the American economy and do not represent a risk to public safety. As you know, all TPS recipients are fully vetted and are required to undergo an array of rigorous biometrics checks to ensure that they are not a risk to national security. To be eligible to apply for TPS, applicants must: (1) satisfy continuous presences and continuous residence requirements; (2) register for TPS during a set period (3) pay a fee and (4) meet other requirements.


Extending TPS for Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, El Salvador, and Syria is a compassionate and pragmatic choice. Giving these countries more time to rebuild and recover from the extraordinary events will protect the lives of vulnerable people and mitigate potential strains on the U.S. economy and immigration system. Moreover, the United States benefits immensely when immigrants work.

We urge you to consider these factors as you make a decision in extending the expiration date of TPS for these countries and await your response.

Sincerely,


Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress


Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress


James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Hank Johnson

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano


Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



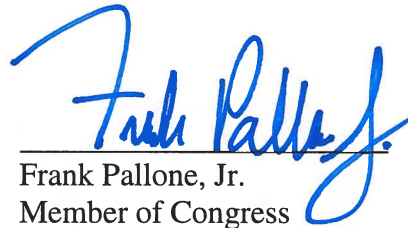
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



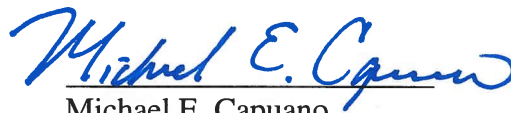
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



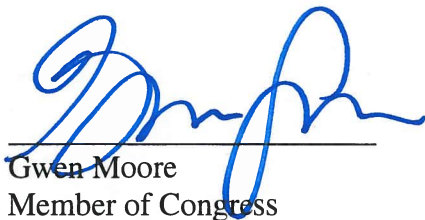
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
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Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



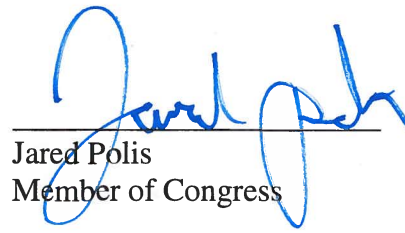
Peter A. DeFazio
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Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



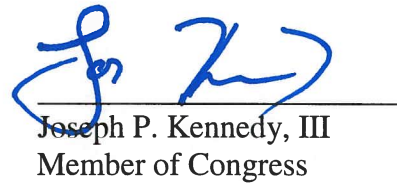
Janice D. Schakowsky
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Jared Polis
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Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



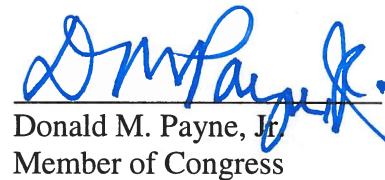
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



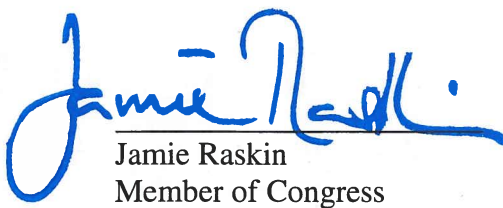
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



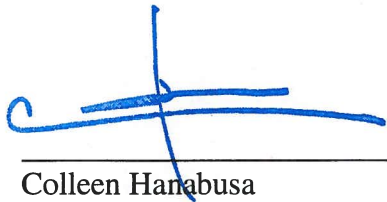
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



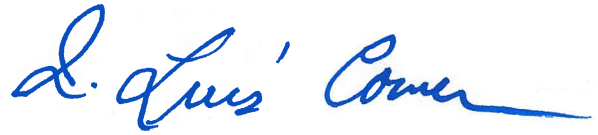
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



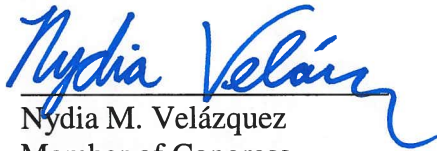
J. Luis Correa
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André Carson
Member of Congress



Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
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Darren Soto
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Ruben Kihuen
Member of Congress



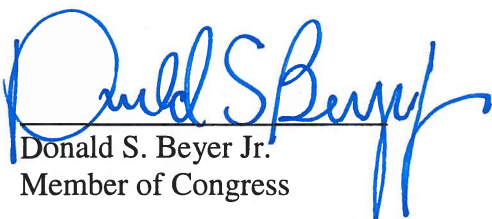
Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



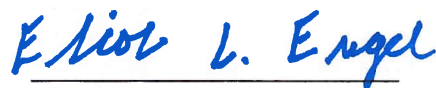
José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



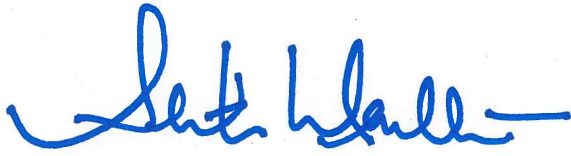
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



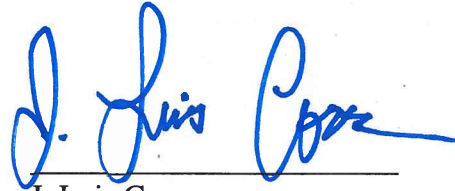
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



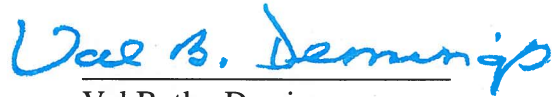
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



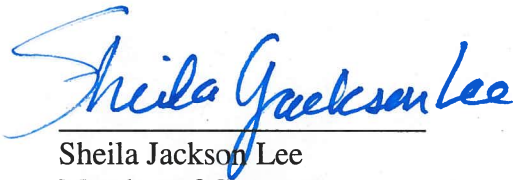
J. Luis Correa
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Mark Takano
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Val Butler Demings
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Sheila Jackson Lee
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Louise McIntosh Slaughter
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Gregory W. Meeks
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Luis V. Gutiérrez
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Alan S. Lowenthal
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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John Lewis
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Gene Green
Member of Congress

Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress

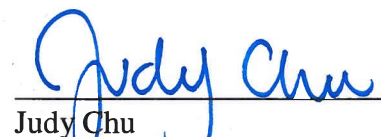
Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

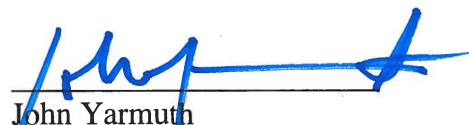
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress


Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress


Grace Meng
Member of Congress


Judy Chu
Member of Congress


John Yarmuth
Member of Congress


Albio Sires
Member of Congress


Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress