

November 29, 2017

To the Massachusetts Delegation:

On behalf of the following undersigned immigrant-serving organizations in Massachusetts, we write to thank you for your support for the approximately 320,000 individuals with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) that are in danger of losing their immigration status, and to request your additional support with respect to certain pending legislative proposals that would benefit these individuals and their U.S. citizen children. These individuals, many of whom have been in the United States for over twenty years, make huge contributions to our economy and to our society. With the recent announcement that TPS for Haitians will be terminated, these communities need our protection now more than ever.

In Massachusetts alone, approximately 12,326 immigrants, plus nearly 6,000 of their U.S. citizen children, would be impacted by the termination of the TPS program.<sup>1</sup> From an economic perspective, the projected annual loss in GDP to Massachusetts if the program is terminated would be \$645.8 million, not counting the turnover and other business costs associated with the loss of employees.<sup>2</sup> These losses would be exacerbated by other economic disruptions across the state's business and real estate sectors, given the high rates of home and business ownership in these communities. In addition to the high economic and social costs of ending the TPS program, the conditions in the home countries of these individuals is unstable, and TPS holders and their U.S. citizen children would face serious health and safety risks if forced to return to their home countries.

The administration has already announced plans to terminate TPS for Nicaragua and Haiti, with a future announcement expected for El Salvador, and Honduras only recently extended for another 6 months. In order to protect these individuals from loss of status and potential harm, a congressional solution is required. We write to urge you to support two current bills, H.R. 4184 Extending Status Protection for Eligible Refugees with Established Residency Act of 2017 (ESPERER Act of 2017) and H.R. 4253 American Promise Act of 2017, which provide pathways to permanent residence for some current holders of TPS.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.miracoalition.org/images/Documents/TPS-factsheet-Nov92017.pdf> (Massachusetts numbers are based on USCIS statistics provided to Senator Edward Markey's office)

<sup>2</sup> Center for American Progress, "TPS Holders Are Integral Members of the U.S. Economy and Society," available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/10/20/440400/tps-holders-are-integral-members-of-the-u-s-economy-and-society/> (Oct. 20, 2017).

The American Promise Act of 2017 provides a pathway to permanent residence for all individuals who held TPS prior to October 1, 2017 and that meet eligibility requirements including three years of physical presence after the enactment of the bill and meet admissibility requirements related to health and criminal history. The ESPERER Act of 2017 allows current TPS recipients from Haiti, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Honduras to apply for permanent residence if they meet certain requirements, such as physical presence in the U.S. since January 12, 2011 and meet admissibility requirements related to health and criminal history. We urge you to support this bill, but advocate for the addition of the other TPS designated countries – such as Syria, Nepal, and Sudan – which have not been included for protection. Both of these bills recognize that the majority of TPS holders have established productive lives in the U.S. through the benefits of the program and should be offered the opportunity to continue the lives that they have built.

We urge you to co-sponsor these bills and to support similar measures and efforts to protect this vulnerable group who represent a very important segment of our society, such as by expressing support for House Congressional Resolution 88 which advocates for the extension of TPS for Haiti until recovery from various natural disasters and health epidemics can be shown. Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke in her most recent TPS announcements urged Congress to develop a long-term solution for these individuals who have been contributing members of our community for decades,<sup>3</sup> and we urge you to take part in these efforts.

This letter is endorsed and submitted on behalf of the following organizations<sup>4</sup>:

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston

Catholic Social Services of Fall River

Central West Justice Center

Chelsea Collaborative

Community Economic Development Center

Community Legal Services and Counseling Center

Dominican Development Center

DOVE, Inc.

Health Law Advocates

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/11/06/acting-secretary-elaine-duke-announcement-temporary-protected-status-nicaragua-and>

<sup>4</sup> For questions or comments about this letter, please communicate with Iris Gomez ([igomez@mlri.org](mailto:igomez@mlri.org); 617-357-0700 ext. 331) or Emily Leung ([eleung@mlri.org](mailto:eleung@mlri.org); 617-357-0700 ext. 344)

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc.

Irish International Immigrant Center

Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts

Kids In Need Of Defense (KIND)

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Northeast Justice Center