

January 4, 2018

The Honorable Kristjen Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

RE: EXTENDING THE LIFESAVING TPS DESIGNATION FOR EL SALVADOR FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER 18 MONTHS

Dear Secretary Nielsen,

As 386 faith leaders and faith-based organizations from many different traditions, we request that you extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for El Salvador for at least another 18 months. Our call stems from our shared values rooted in our sacred texts to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger, the sojourner among us. As Leviticus 19:33-34 reminds us: "Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself, because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God."

Approximately 200,000 Salvadorans currently live in the U.S. as TPS holders, and given the impending January 8th deadline by which a decision must be made to extend it, we urge you to grant an 18-month extension.¹ TPS holders are an integral part of the fabric of our community. They worship in our congregations, they are our caretakers, our teachers, our entrepreneurs, and they are our neighbors. Salvadoran TPS holders not only contribute to our nation's economy, but many of them are also parents to 192,700 U.S. citizen children, as well as spouses and partners to permanent legal residents.² We cannot sit idly by while our Salvadoran brothers and sisters are separated from their families. We want to ensure that families can stay together and that they have a chance to succeed. Separating families and sending people to exploitative situations in the countries where they would face harm or have not lived for nearly 20 years is against basic principles of human dignity and mercy.

Extending TPS is vital to advancing important regional security initiatives and serves an important humanitarian role by providing for the safety, well-being, and stability of TPS holders in the United States, as well as the recovery of the designated country. In 2001, the Bush Administration designated El Salvador for TPS due to multiple earthquakes.³ Subsequent administrations extended TPS for El Salvador due to conditions that prevented Salvadoran TPS holders' safe return.⁴ Forced gang conscription, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation are among the many human rights violations to which children, families, women and men are subjected in El Salvador.⁵ In addition, El Salvador has the highest murder rate in the world, and a staggering 6,657 homicides were recorded in the country in 2015, a 70 percent increase from the year prior.⁶ When Salvadoran TPS was extended in 2016, the U.S. government also cited persisting dire climate conditions, which were "brought about by numerous natural disasters, including hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding, volcanic seismic activity, prolonged drought that caused widespread food and water insecurity [and] the spread of mosquito-borne illnesses."⁷ All of the aforementioned crises continue to plague El Salvador and impeded El Salvador's recovery, and we urge you to ensure that no one is forcibly returned to the country in its current state.

We are also deeply concerned about the children who entered the United States through the Central American Minors (CAM) program, fleeing violence or persecution in El Salvador, Honduras, and

¹ 81 Fed. Reg. 44645 (July 8, 2016).

² *TPS Holders in the United States*, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS, https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2017/10/19125633/101717_TPSFactsheet-USA.pdf.

³ 66 Fed. Reg. 14214 (March 9, 2001).

⁴ Fed. Reg. 44645 (July 8, 2016).

⁵ *Children on the Run: Unaccompanied Children Leaving Central America and Mexico and the need for International Protection*, UNHCR (March 13, 2014), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/532180c24.html>.

⁶ Alan Gomez, *El Salvador: World's new murder capital*, USA TODAY (Jan. 8, 2016), www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/01/07/el-salvador-homicide-rate-honduras-guatemala-illegal-immigration-to-united-states/78358042.

⁷ 81 Fed. Reg. 44645 (July 8, 2016).

Guatemala to reunite with a parent in the United States. About 90 percent of CAM refugee or parolee children have a TPS holder parent. The consequences of terminating El Salvador's TPS designation would be immediate and profound, jeopardizing the lives of children the U.S. government promised to protect and threatening the sanctity of family unity. Families would be at increased risk of family separation, which could result in further interactions with the child welfare system, as primary caregivers are stripped of TPS and become eligible for removal.

We pray that you may find compassion and urge you to extend El Salvador's TPS designation for at least another 18 months, as it currently does not have the infrastructure or institutions to adequately handle the return of its nationals. Terminating TPS for El Salvador would separate families, negatively impact regional security, and have negative economic and humanitarian consequences in El Salvador and the United States. As people of faith, we implore you to think about the moral imperative to love our neighbor, welcome the sojourner, and care for the most vulnerable among us.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. If you have any questions, please contact Jill Marie Bussey at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. at jbussey@cliniclegal.org or Meredith Owen at Church World Service at Mowen@cwsglobal.org.

Sincerely,

Faith Leaders

Rev. Julie Wilson, United Methodist Church

Rev Gregory Gross, United Methodist Church

Rev. Anna Lange-Soto, El Buen Pastor & NS de Guadalupe Episcopal Vicar

Rev. Cecil Prescod, Ainsworth United Church of Christ

Dr. James Croft, Ethical Society of St. Louis

Pastor emeritus Stan Verheul, Los Angeles Community Chr. Reformed Church

Rev Sandi John, First Baptist Chico

Rabbi Kim Geringer, The Chai Center

Dr Arturo Chávez, Mexican American Catholic College

Deaconess Cindy Johnson, El Buen Pastor United Methodist Church

Rev. Will McGarvey, Community Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg, CA & Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County

Rev. Dr. Karen Boehk, United Methodist

Sister Laetitia Bordes, Society of Helpers

Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition

Br. Michael Potvin-Frost, Order of Franciscan Hermits

Pastor Anne Hall, Lutheran Church in the San Juans

Rabbi Deborah Waxman, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College/Jewish Reconstructionist Communities

Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes, St. Matthew's United Methodist Church

Monk of Ramakrishna Order Swami Atmajnanananda, Vedanta Center of Greater Washington, DC

Mr Kevin Nelson, First United Methodist Church

Rev Stephen Quill, Retired ELCA pastor

Sister S. Mary Anne Owens, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province

Sister Kristine Vorenkamp, Sisters of the Living Word

Rev. Allan Wysocki, Lutheran - ELCA

Rev. Kristin Maier, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield
Mrs. and Rev. Barbara and Jim Dale, First United Methodist Church, Decorah IA
Rev. Joseph Easley, Indiana Conference, United Methodist Church
Sister Elaine Sanchez, Sisters of the Holy Family
Sensei Abby Terris, Corvallis Zen Circle
Sister Michelle Sinkhorn, Sisters of St. Benedict Immigration Outreach
Rev Kristin Dollar, Buncombe Street United Methodist Church
MaryAnn Gregory, Lay leader, St Paul's UCC Westminster MD
Rev. Clint Collins, First Christian Church
Rabbi Brian Zimmerman, Beth El
Rev. David Farley, Director of Justice & Compassion Ministries for the Cal-Pac Conference of the United Methodist Church
Sister Maryann Mueller, Felician Sisters
Rev. Joyce Hardy, Christ Episcopal Church
Mrs. Ida Kokial, St. Andrew United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Clay Brantley, Presbyterian
Rev. David Farrell, CSC, Congregation of Holy Cross
Pastor Paul Hagedorn, ELCA
Rev. Catherine Cooke, Cathedral Church of St. Paul
Rev. Steven Klemz, Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, ELCA
Reverend Marion Wright, The United Methodist Church
Rev. Dr. Allison Tanner, Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church
Rabbi Ellen Jaffe-Gill, Tidewater Chavurah
Rev. Jessica Vacketta, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, The Interfaith Center of NY
Reverend Dr. Neil G Cazares-Thomas, Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ
Rev. Joel Tooley, Mosaic Compassion
Rev. Eric Anspaugh, Antioch COB
Rev. Sharon Williams, Nueva Vida Norristown New Life Mennonite Church
Joseph Mas, Attorney, Columbus Mennonite Church
Rev. Diane Mettam, United Methodist Church
Nun Karen Van de walle, Congregation of St. Joseph
Rabbi Neil Comess-Daniels, Beth Shir Shalom
Rev. Dr. Russ Peterman, University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rev. Pamela Werner, St. James Lutheran Church/ELCA
Rev. Amanda Gayle Reed, Gooding United Methodist Church
Bishop Elias Galvan, United Methodist
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Sister Carol Boschert, Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, MO
Rev. Eliot Moss, Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts (non-parochial)
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Rev Phillip Grigsby, Schenectady Inner City Ministry
Rev Patricia Ashley, Presbytery of Tropical Florida
Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition

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Reverend Luis-Alfredo Cartagena Zayas, Park Avenue Christian
Father John Duffell, The Church of the Blessed Sacrament
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Rev Joseph Keesecker, Guadalupe Presbyterian Church
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Brother Anthony Zuba, Church of the Good Shepherd
Sister Kathlyn Mulcahy, Dominican Sister
Rabbi Judith Edelstein
Yanira Chacon, Outreach Worker, St Brigid's Church
Sister Diane Bardol, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Rabbi Renee Bauer, Jewish Social Services of Madison
Sister Ceil Roeger, Dominican Sisters of Houston
Chaplain/Pastoral Counselor Patricia Hollinger, Quaker/Church of the Brethren
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Rev. Ross Carmichael, St. Andrew Lutheran Church
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Sister Maureen O'Hara, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Sister Judy Stephens, Sisters of St. Joseph
Sister Dorothy LeBlanc, Congregation of St. Joseph
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Dr. Sister Bridget Connor, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Rev. James Hug, Adrian Dominican Sisters
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Rev. Martha Sims, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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The Rev. Susan Champion, Christ the Lord Episcopal Church
Rev. Kris Van Engen, New Community Fourth Reformed Church
Rev. Kate Kooyman, Christian Reformed Church in North America

Sister Patricia Gardner, Sisters of St. Francis
Karen Hartman, Director of IJPC US Area, Franciscan Sisters of the Poor
Sister Fidelis Rubbo, Sisters of St. Francis
Sister Sr. Janice Perrault, Sisters of the Presentation of Mary
Rev. Martha Brimm, Chapel of the Cross
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Sister Rebecca La Point, Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio
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Sister Anna Marie Reha, School Sister of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province
Rev. Sandra Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Donna Horn, Connection Coordinator/Caring and Hospitality, Lancaster United Methodist Church
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Sister Rosemarie Goins, Felician Sisters of North America
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Sr. Brigid Hart, BVM
Sister Mary A. Klawinski, Felician Sisters
Sister Christine Stankiewicz, Felician-Franciscan Sisters
Bishop Elias Galvan, United Methodist
Marguerite Polcyn OSF, Sisters of St. Francis
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Sr. Rose Mary Meyer, Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sister Margaret Clark, Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sister Nancy Jamroz, Felician Franciscan Sisters of North America
Sr. Sister Michaeleen Pardowsky, Felician Sisters

Sister Margretta Wojcik, Sisters of St. Francis (Sylvania, Ohio)
Rabbi Nancy Kasten
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Sister JT (Doris) Dwyer, Daughters of Charity
Sister Victoria Indyk, Felician Sisters
Dr. Will Hine, Central Christian Church
Sister Dorothy Moczygemba, Felician Sisters
Sister Diane Rapozo, Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sister Julia Lanigan, Grey Nuns of the Sacred/Roman Catholic
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Rev. Joel Gibson, Micah Institute
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Sister Mary Pellegrino, Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden
Sister Noel Marie Gabriel, Felician Sisters of North America
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Dr. Mary Hunt, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)
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Rev. Dave Bean, Pioneer United Methodist Church
Sister Kate O'Donnell, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Sister Bernadine Karge, Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, WI
Sister Peg Regan, School Sisters of Notre Dame
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Director Gerry Lee, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
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Sister Judith Garson, Religious of the Sacred Heart
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Sister Carmella Campione, Congregation of Saint Joseph
Margaret Feit Clarke, Facilitator, Peace & Justice Committee, St. Nicholas Parish
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Sister Janet Luecke, Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate
Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
Kaira Jewel Lingo, Dharma Teacher, Order of Interbeing
Rev. Dr. Stan Duncan, United Church of Christ
Marcia Lee, Coordinator of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office, Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph
Sister Mary Brigid Clingman, OP, Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Sister Beatrice Hernandez, Wheaton Franciscan JPIC Office
Rabbi Benjamin Barnett, Havurah Shalom
Sister Sara Aldridge, Sisters of St. Francis
Sr. Christina Brodie, Director, Hands Across our Community, Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, KS
Rabbi Elizabeth Richman, Jews United for Justice
Rabbi Maurice Harris, Jewish Reconstructionist Communities
Rev. Maria Swearingen, Calvary Baptist Church
Promoter of Social Justice Sister Benita Coffey OSB, Benedictine Sisters of Chicago
Ed Crump, Lay Leader, Foundry United Methodist Church
Rabbi Michael Feinberg, Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
Rev Kristin Dollar, Buncombe Street UMC

Rev. Laura Martin, Rock Spring UCC
Rev. Charles Booker, Bethesda Presbyterian Church
Student Pastor Chelsea Spyres, St. Matthew's UMC
Pastor Sandra Miller, Seekers Church
Bette Hoover, Clerk, Peace Committee, Sandy Spring Friends (Quakers) Meeting
Guillermo Torres, Senior Faith Rooted Organizer, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice
Imam Ali Siddiqui, Muslim Institute for Interfaith Studies & Understanding
Reverend Cynthia Lapp, Hyattsville Mennonite Church
Dr. Mary E. Hunt, Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)
Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, Franciscans Friars
Rev Stephen Price, First Baptist Church of Hyattsville
Rabbi Deborah Bodin Cohen, Beth Chai
Patricia Nemore, Servant Leader, Seekers Church
Pastor Trenton Stokes, Fellowship Greenville
Dharma Teacher Kaira Jewel Lingo, Order of Interbeing
Dr. Fritz von Fleckenstein, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
Associate Pastor Michelle Burkholder, Hyattsville Mennonite Church
Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Rabbi Rachel Ackerman, Temple Shalom
Father Frederick LaBrecque, Diocese of Charleston
Sister Nancy Miller, Franciscan Peace Center
Rev Sarah Caine, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax
Deacon Martha Davis, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
Rev Brandon Lazarus, Memorial UMC, Charlotte
Rev. Robert Hardies, All Souls Church, Unitarian
Rev. Maybelle Bennett, Covenant Christian Community
Rev. Karen Brau, Luther Place Memorial Church
Rev. Mary Jo Bradshaw, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Faith Organizations

Adorers of the Blood of Christ
All Souls Church Unitarian Social Justice Ministry
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
American Jewish Committee (AJC)
Anti-Defamation League
Bethesda Presbyterian Church
Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph, Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation
Carmelite Sisters, Vedula Intercontinental Commission for Justice with Peace
Catholic Charities, Diocese of San Diego
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston
Catholic Charities of Diocese of Pueblo

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh
Catholic Charities of West TN
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami
Catholic Migration Services
Centro Comunitario CEUS
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Refugee & Immigration Ministries
Church World Service
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester
Community Resource Center NY
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Daughters of Wisdom JPIC USA
Dominicans of Sinsinawa
El Refugio Ministry
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Meeting of Washington
Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition
Grey Nun of the Sacred Heart
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Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Hope Border Institute
Hug "For The Making Of New Americans"
Immigrant Family Support Network - Wichita
Immigrant Hope-Wyoming Idaho
Immigration & Refugee Services/Catholic Social Service of RI
Institute Justice Team- Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center
Interfaith Welcome Coalition
IUC Ministerios Rios de Agua Viva / Joy Like a River UCC
Jefferson County Immigrant Rights Advocates (JCIRA)
Jews United for Justice
Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Priests of the Sacred Heart, US Province
Kino Border Initiative
La Comunidad, Inc.
Latino Pastoral Action Center
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
LUCHA Ministries, Inc.
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Massachusetts Communities Action Network
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Jewish Women
National Justice for Our Neighbors
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
NH Conference UCC Immigration Group
NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform
Office of Life, Justice & Peace, Archdiocese of Portland
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
OLA RAZA INC
Oregon Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice (IMIrJ)
Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church
Pax Christi Florida
Pax Christi Illinois
PICO National Network
Rock Spring Congregational UCC
Schenectady Inner City Ministry
School Sisters of Notre Dame - Central Pacific Province
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, Inc.
Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of New York
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Institute Justice Team
Sisters of St. Francis
Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania OH
Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden
Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis
Sisters, Home Visitors of Mary
Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities
St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee in Latin America (IFCLA)
The Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
The Interfaith Center of New York
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville
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UUCR
UURISE - Unitarian Universalist Refugee & Immigrant Services & Education
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

cc: Rex Tillerson, United States Secretary of State
L. Francis Cissna, Director, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services