

Honorable John F. Kelly
Secretary Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

RE: Request from Haitian Religious Leaders to Extend Temporary Protected Status for Haiti

Dear Secretary Kelly:

We are writing as pastors and other faith leaders who are directly from Haitian heritage. We are grateful to serve our fellow Haitians who live across the United States. We are writing in this very vital time because we are hearing from our community members every day about their growing anxieties unless Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is renewed for at least another 18 months following its upcoming expiration on July 22, 2017. We deeply urge you to use your authority and leadership to extend TPS for Haitians already in the United States for another 18 months and re-designate TPS to permit more Haitians living in the United States to receive protections while the fragile nation struggles to recover fully.

As people of faith, we are reminded to: “Bring water to the thirsty, meet the fugitive with bread... For they have fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow, and from the stress of battle.” Isaiah 21:14-15. “And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.” (Deuteronomy 10:19).

On behalf of all of our Haitian community members, we wish to express clearly to you how serious health and safety risks continue to remain now in Haiti. For example, just weeks ago, the Centers for Disease Control, in its Annual Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Conference, [reported](#) that Haitians are still in danger of being infected with cholera in especially rural but also urban areas. More than that, dangerous conditions continue to remain following the recent Hurricane Matthew. Haiti faces massive food insecurity and immediate risks of malnutrition, hunger, and death; widespread disease and the worst cholera epidemic in the world; and ongoing economic instability. After the 2010 earthquake that devastated the country, Haiti struggled to recover, and the 2016 hurricane only exacerbated these conditions.

Beyond these risks, we remind you that to allow TPS for Haiti to expire would mean turning our backs on the vulnerable Haitians whom we pledged to welcome here in the United States. The purpose of TPS has always been to provide protection to those in the United States when it is unsafe for their return home. The conditions in Haiti today meet precisely these conditions of lack of safety.

Perhaps most importantly, our community members with current TPS in the United States demonstrate every day the great value they are offering to the country, both through the service jobs and through the professional jobs they hold that meet critical needs and upbuild their neighborhoods with leadership and needed skills. Haitians are committed to working very hard in ways that makes the American neighborhoods where they live stronger. They do so both to support their families here in the U.S. and to support their families in Haiti with needed remittances that help the recovery and healing of Haiti.

Extending Haitian TPS until the country is stable is in the U.S. national interest, as well as in the interest of Haitians themselves. More than that, it is the right and moral decision to make—and it helps us to continue to fulfill the commitment of our faith and deepest values, to protect the vulnerable, to love our neighbor as ourselves” (Luke 10) and seek “to bind up the brokenhearted” (Isaiah 61).

Sincerely,