

Acting Secretary Elaine Duke  
Secretary Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20016

November 13, 2017

RE: Request from Haitian Religious Leaders  
to Re-Designate and Extend Temporary Protected Status for Haiti for 18 Months

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

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 vital time because our community members are expressing anxiety every day after hearing that Haitian TPS may end on January 22, 2018. We strongly urge that you reconsider this decision immediately to ensure that Haitian TPS recipients will have their status renewed for a full 18 months.

Especially, we want to be sure that you carefully consider some key reports from faith and business partners that underline the importance of our request. Just on November 1<sup>st</sup>, for example, we are aware that the Evangelical Immigration Roundtable sent you a letter where they noted, “Haiti, initially designated with TPS after the horrific earthquake of 2010, has recently been hit by several severe hurricanes.” They called for an extension of Haitian TPS, and said that “chronic unemployment and underemployment...would likely be exacerbated by a sudden insertion of residents who have lived abroad for many years, harming the poorest of the poor.” We are also aware that Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley on November 3 wrote you to urge a re-designation and extension of TPS for Haitians, El Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Nicaraguans. They specifically said, “Haiti has not fully recovered from the (2010) earthquake, and then has suffered further damage from Hurricane Matthew. Haiti is not ready to receive its nationals.”

We remind you also that over 700 interfaith leaders have signed a letter in support of re-designation of TPS status for Haitians and others. In their letter, they communicated that “The United States has a moral responsibility to not return children, families, and individuals that have been subject to persecution to extremely violent territories.” And, our faith partners at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network have produced a report at: <https://cliniclegal.org/sites/default/files/resources/Temporary-Protected-Status-for-Haiti-Helps-Stabilize-the-Region-and-Protects-American-Families.pdf> that outlines in great detail how extending TPS for Haiti is in line with U.S. economic, societal and regional security interests, as well as with faith and U.S. values.

As Haitian faith leaders, we are already seeing some of our community members leave the U.S. for Canada, and we believe that, if you do not renew Haitian TPS, many more will leave for Canada; producing a humanitarian crisis. Many of our key pastoral leaders have met with Haitian government leaders in both the U.S. and in Haiti in recent months, and we are aware of their public statements also urging the administration to extend Haitian TPS status. Our communities are telling us daily how concerned they are about the losses to U.S. business interests that would happen if they are forced to leave their jobs in health care, in poultry production, and in so many other service and industry areas. They are deeply frightened about the impact upon their families, if they are to lose their ability to both support their families here in the U.S. and to contribute remittances that help build stability for their relatives and their birth nation in Haiti.

Please, we are praying that you will listen to every raised voice, and that you will do the right thing for our Haitian community—which offers great value to the United States, to our congregations, and to our communities.

Sincerely,

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