

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 25, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016

The Honorable John Sullivan
Acting Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Nielsen and Acting Secretary Sullivan:

We write to urge you to extend the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Honduras, which is set to expire on July 5, 2018. Since its inception, TPS has permitted the United States to offer humanitarian protection to foreign nationals who are unable to return to the dire conditions in their homeland.

In considering the extension of TPS designation for Honduras, we encourage you to consider the unique conditions in the country, which provide a clear basis for TPS extension in accordance with the law. Although TPS was initially made available for Hondurans after Hurricane Mitch ravaged the country in 1998, successive Republican and Democratic administrations have considered its lasting effects as well as subsequent security challenges.

In 2016, the people of Honduras were victims of 5,150 murders, a rate of approximately 59 murders per 100,000 people – one of the highest in the world.¹ In addition, Honduras has one of the highest rates of femicide in the world,² and according to the Center for Women's Rights, a woman was murdered every 14 hours in 2012.³ Hondurans face threats from street gangs, which are widespread and prey on small businesses and families through extortion. Endemic corruption and weak rule of law fuel impunity and exacerbate the security challenges. Beyond the epidemic levels of violence, more than two thirds of the Honduran population live in poverty and, in rural areas, 20 percent of Hondurans live on less than \$2 a day.⁴

Ending TPS for Hondurans would force more than 86,031 individuals to go back to a country with severe security challenges. We are also concerned that the Honduran government lacks the capacity to facilitate their return, which would make it difficult to ensure their protection. More importantly, we are extremely concerned about the more than 53,500⁵ U.S. born children who would have to accompany their TPS beneficiary parents and who would be vulnerable to recruitment by gangs in Honduras.

In recent years, the United States has increased cooperation with Central American governments, including the Honduran government, in order to address the underlying factors driving migration in the region. Through foreign assistance and diplomatic engagement, the United States has made significant investments to support security, economic development and stability in Central

¹ <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=21167>

² <http://abcnews.go.com/International/men-women-honduras-inside-dangerous-places-earth-woman/story?id=47135328>

³ <http://derechosdelamujer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Observatorio-Violencia-contra-las-mujeres-hondurenas.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/honduras/overview>


⁵ https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2017/10/19125633/101717_TPSFactsheet-USA.pdf


America. A decision to end TPS designation for Honduras would threaten the very stability we seek to achieve in Central America and would undermine our foreign policy objectives there.


In closing, we urge you to consider the critical conditions in Honduras and the destabilizing effects that terminating this TPS designation would entail. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We look forward to your response.


Sincerely,

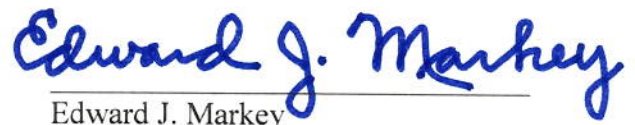

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United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

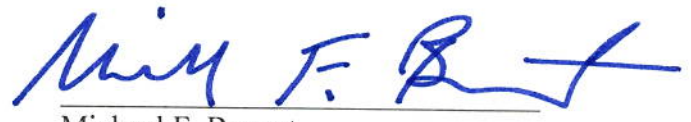

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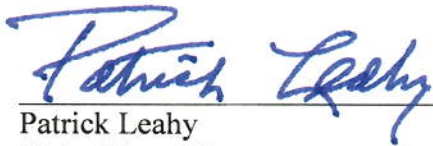
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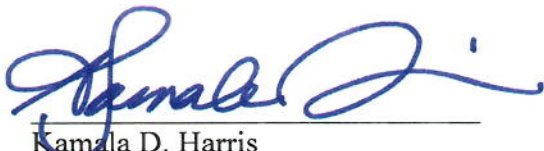
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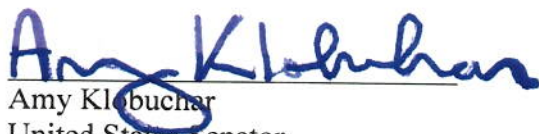
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