

November 3, 2017

The Honorable John Cornyn  
United States Senate  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

As business leaders, business owners, businesses, and organizations in the state of Texas, we write to express our interest in the upcoming decisions related to the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for El Salvador, Haiti, and Honduras. Given the recent destruction by Hurricane Harvey our businesses and local economies will now, more than ever, need these legally authorized workers from these countries, and be adversely impacted by a failure to extend their status.

A series of deadlines beginning early November 2017 will shape the lives of over 300,000 people from these countries who currently have TPS. Grounded in clear statutory authority since its creation in 1990, countries can be designated for TPS by the Secretary of Homeland Security if a country experiences an armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. The TPS designations continue to stand on their own merits, with environmental recovery and serious violence in El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti continuing to place the safety of returning nationals at risk, but also making it difficult for those countries to absorb deportees without deleterious, destabilizing consequences.

The impact of terminating TPS for these large populations could profoundly impact Houston's reconstruction. Even before the hurricane hit, two-thirds of contractors in the South were reporting difficulty finding needed workers. Extending TPS for these three countries would avoid the near-term loss of work authorization for an estimated 50,000 construction workers nationwide – many who already reside in Texas, with many more willing to come to Houston to assist with reconstruction.

It is important to note that these TPS workers are not new to their jobs; over half of Salvadoran and Honduran TPS holders and roughly 16% of Haitians with TPS have lived in the United States for more than 20 years. They are productive employees who also supervise and manage operations, performing essential work in construction and other critical industries.

The Texas business community has also come to depend on the almost 45,000 TPS holders who live here, more than 84% of whom participate in the labor force. An estimated one-third of TPS households nationwide have mortgages, placing localities where TPS holders reside in large numbers at risk of a housing depression. And if these TPS designations were allowed to expire, hundreds of thousands of individuals would lose their employment authorization on a single day, sending shockwaves through businesses around the state and entire industries and leading to turnover costs totaling in the millions of dollars.

The uncertainty and economic harm that would result from negative decisions on TPS can be avoided. In the face of these challenges, we urge you to encourage the administration to extend

TPS designations for El Salvador, Haiti, and Honduras for 18 months while working with your colleagues towards a legislative solution.

Respectfully,

Texas Agricultural Irrigation Association

Texas Border Coalition

Texas Hotel & Lodging Association

TEXO, The Construction Association

United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce,  
Houston-The Woodlands-Gulf Coast Chapter

FValdezLaw PC

L'Oca d'Oro

Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

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\* signed in their individual capacity