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November 17, 2017

ST. MARK'S SCHOOL

Admission Office

The Honorable Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, D. C. 20528

tel: 508.786.6000
fax: 508.786.6120

Dear Secretary Duke,

My name is Anne Behnke and I am Director of Admission at St. Mark's School in Southborough, MA. I am sure you are inundated with letters begging you to please reconsider the expiration of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for the citizens of Haiti, El Salvador and Honduras. I want to add my plea to thousands of others who are heartbroken by the current expiration date of January 22, 2018. I am speaking from my heart about the possibility that an amazing young man who attends St. Mark's and is in his senior year here might get ripped away along with his parents and have to return to Haiti where there is nothing for them to return to. In addition, he has two younger sisters, one whom attends St. Mark's, who were both born in the United States and will be left with no one to care for them.

I know that there is somewhere in the vicinity of 50,000 Haitians in the United States and nearly 5,000 in Massachusetts alone. What so many people don't see that we see here at St. Mark's is how lovely and hard-working these families are. These are human lives and they are important and they are contributing to our community. The young man at St. Mark's is a scholar and an integral part of our community and it would rip us apart if he had to leave.

Please know that I am fighting for every single one of these families from Haiti, El Salvador and Honduras but I am directly affected by this family from Haiti.

I am begging you to please do whatever you can to extend TPS and allow these families from Haiti, El Salvador and Honduras to remain in the United States.

Thank you very much,

Most Sincerely,

Anne E. Behnke
Director of Admission
St. Mark's School
25 Marlboro Road
Southborough, MA 01772
508-786-6111



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

February 5, 2018

Ms. Anne E. Behnke
Director of Admissions
St. Mark's School
25 Marlboro Road
Southborough, Massachusetts 01772

Dear Ms. Behnke:

Thank you for your November 17, 2017 letter to the Department of Homeland Security. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

I appreciate your interest in the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for Haiti, El Salvador, and Honduras. The Secretary of Homeland Security's authority to designate or redesignate a country for TPS and to extend or terminate a country's existing designation is based upon specific statutory criteria. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 244(b). U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is principally responsible for advising the Secretary on TPS issues and implementing the program.

At least 60 days before the current expiration date for a TPS designation, the Secretary must review conditions in the foreign country and, after consultation with other appropriate federal agencies, determine whether the statutory conditions for TPS continue to be met. Under the INA, if the Secretary determines that the conditions for designation are no longer met with respect to a country, the Secretary is required to terminate the designation. *See* INA § 244(b)(1),(3).

After considering information from several U.S. Government sources, on November 20, 2017, former Acting Secretary Duke announced the termination of Haiti's TPS designation after determining that the statutory conditions for its designation no longer continued to be met. To allow for an orderly transition, the former Acting Secretary delayed the effective date by 18 months. Accordingly, Haiti's TPS designation will terminate on July 22, 2019. The 18-month period will provide time for individuals with TPS to arrange for their departure or to seek an alternative lawful immigration status in the United States. Additional information on the termination of Haiti TPS can be found on the USCIS website and in a notice that was published in the *Federal Register* on January 18, 2018.

Secretary Nielsen decided to terminate the TPS designation for El Salvador after considering information from several U.S. Government sources, with a delay of 18 months to allow for an orderly transition before the designation terminates on September 9, 2019. DHS is

Ms. Anne E. Behnke

Page 2

committed to an orderly transition that will allow time for El Salvador to prepare for the return and reintegration of its citizens. USCIS will work with the State Department and the government of El Salvador to help inform relevant stakeholders in-country and in the United States to ensure an orderly return and reintegration of El Salvador's citizens. Additional details on the Secretary's decision and the process for current El Salvador TPS beneficiaries to renew their work authorization documentation until TPS terminates on September 9, 2019, can be found in the notice that was published in the *Federal Register* on January 18, 2018.

In regards to Honduras, former Acting Secretary Duke did not make a determination by the 60-day deadline for Honduras (November 6, 2017), resulting in an automatic six-month extension of the designation. Details regarding this extension and the process for Honduran TPS beneficiaries to re-register can be found on the USCIS website and in the *Federal Register* notice published on December 15, 2017.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in these important issues. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LFC", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

L. Francis Cissna
Director