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Regarding Haitian Refugees and Temporary Protected Status Renewal

The Honorable John F. Kelly
Secretary of U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We have recently learned that renewal of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians is being reviewed with the potential that it will be ended, disallowing up to 58,000 Haitians from continuing to live, work, and stay in the United States legally. As ministers, missionaries, concerned citizens, and development workers who visit Haiti frequently, who have lived there, and who know firsthand the struggle that Haiti continues to endure, we respectfully ask that this decision be considered with the welfare of these Haitians in mind.

Haiti continues to struggle because of failing infrastructure and inadequate housing. Many gains that had been made in the country were reversed when Hurricane Matthew struck last October, destroying homes and other dwellings. Some of our ministries work to build houses for Haitians, and we currently have people waiting for adequate housing. Adding 58,000 more people to an already difficult and volatile situation is a recipe for disaster, for those who would be sent back as well as for Haiti itself at this time.

As for the Haitians who would lose their TPS, one in five of them now have U.S. citizen children. Of those under age 25, 70 percent are in school. Many Haitians with TPS are nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides. Haitians are working hard, raising families, and contributing to our society in the United States. If they lose their TPS, they will no longer be able to work, will not be able to stay here legally, and their families will likely be plunged into poverty. If they are sent back without adequate support, housing, job prospects, or education for their children, tens of thousands will suffer and not be able to adequately provide for their families.

We ask that you extend TPS for Haitians seeking refuge until Haiti can better take in tens of thousands of people, whom it is not prepared to absorb at present. Hurricane Matthew hit and created massive destruction in the country just seven months ago. Tens of thousands still do not have adequate housing following the 2010 earthquake. Where will these people go? What will happen to their children? We ask that you consider these factors and that TPS be extended until we can develop better solutions for the Haitians whom we have allowed to live among us.

Signed,

Alan Cross, Executive Director
Community Development Initiatives
Montgomery, Alabama (engaged in past development work in Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Bossier, Haiti)

Jared McCrory, Executive Director
Children's Hope (and the Haiti Initiative)
Montgomery, Alabama (working extensively in Jacmel, Haiti)

Charley Elgin, Executive Director

Pathfinder Mission
Montgomery, Alabama (working in Jeremie and Jacmel, Haiti)

John Bush, Director
Across Festivals
Montgomery, Alabama (directed work in Jacmel, Haiti)

Josh Raybon, Student Pastor
Eastern Shore Baptist Church
Daphne, Alabama (extensive work in Southern Haiti)

Bryant Thompson, Missions Pastor
Eastern Shore Baptist Church
Daphne, Alabama (development work in Southern Haiti)

Tim Brister, Executive Director
The Haiti Collective
Spring Hill, Tennessee (engages in extensive development work and leadership training all over Haiti)



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

January 17, 2017

Mr. Alan Cross
Executive Director
Community Development Initiatives
20 Interstate Park Drive
Montgomery, Alabama 36109

Dear Mr. Cross:

Thank you for your June 15, 2017 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

I appreciate your interest in the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Haiti. 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).

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. However, to allow for an orderly transition, the former Acting Secretary delayed the effective date by 18 months, so the termination of Haiti's designation will not become effective until July 22, 2019. This 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 TPS for Haiti can be found in former Acting Secretary Duke's November 20th announcement of the decision posted on the DHS website, on the USCIS website, and in a notice that will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 18, 2018.

Mr. Alan Cross

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Thank you for your letter and interest in this important issue. Please share this response with the co-signers of your letter. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LFC", with a stylized flourish at the end.

L. Francis Cissna
Director