

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

SCANNED/RECEIVED
BY ESEC SEC
2018 FEB -7 PM 2:04

Dear Secretary Nielsen,

We write to strongly urge you to renew the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Syria.

Failure to renew TPS for Syrians would send thousands of Syrians living in the United States back to a country still wracked by civil war, the heinous brutality of the Assad regime, and lingering militant groups. There are currently nearly 7,000 Syrians living throughout the United States having fled the indiscriminate killing and wanton violence that has killed more than 400,000 Syrian civilians and displaced more than 12 million individuals. Syrians within the U.S. have contributed to our economy and workforce and have become integrated into the fabric of their communities.

Sending thousands of Syrians back to their home country would condemn them to certain death as there remains a "substantial disruption of living conditions" required for TPS as enumerated in statute (INA 1990, §244). With continued airstrikes against civilians and gas attacks against neighborhoods as recently as Saturday January 13, conditions remain as dire - if not worse - since the most recent extension was made on August 1, 2016.

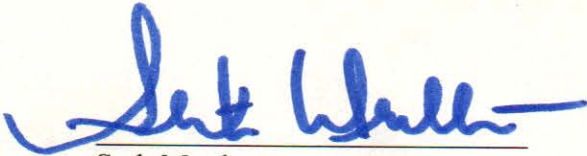
As the Department of Homeland Security did when designating Syria for Temporary Protected Status in 2012, we encourage the same comprehensive background checks to continue as appropriate for applicants.

Similar TPS designations have been made and extended by both Republican and Democratic administrations since its establishment in statute in 1990, and renewing this designation is not only fully within your authority but entirely appropriate given the conditions within Syria. Throughout our history, the United States has stood tall as a shining beacon of hope for those fleeing the violence of international conflict and civil war from the post-World War II period, to the Vietnam War, to the Balkan conflicts.

We strongly urge you to renew TPS for Syrians to ensure those having just fled such brutality do not have to return to certain death and ensure our country remains a refuge for those seeking safety from terror.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

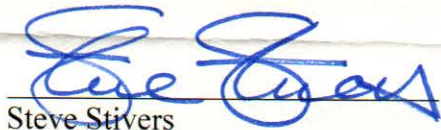
Sincerely,



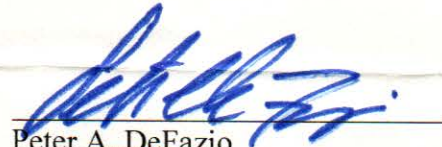
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



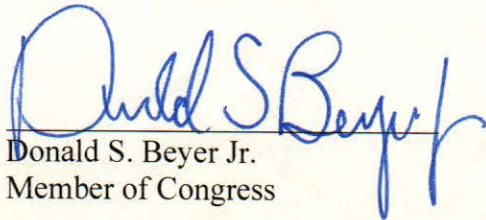
Steve Russell
Member of Congress



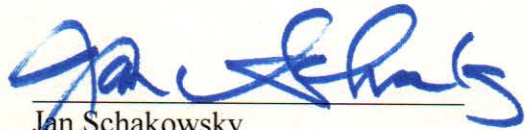
Steve Stivers
Member of Congress



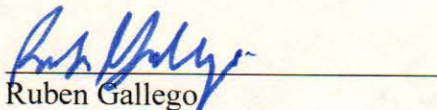
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



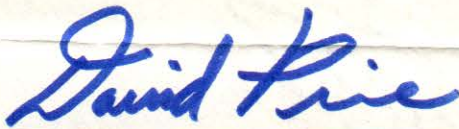
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



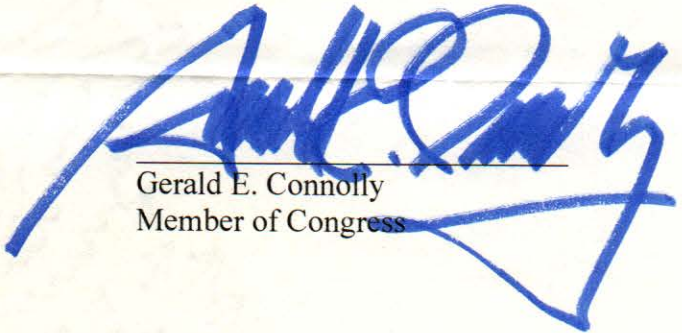
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



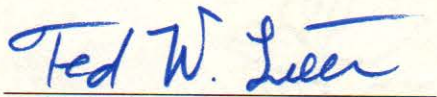
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

February 22, 2018

The Honorable Seth Moulton
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Moulton:

Thank you for your January 26, 2018 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

I appreciate your interest in the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Syria. 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 carefully considering relevant conditions in Syria and the statutory TPS requirements, Secretary Nielsen decided to extend the TPS designation for Syria for 18 months, through September 30, 2019. Prior to the conclusion of this 18-month extension, the Secretary will review conditions in Syria and, after consultation with other appropriate federal agencies, determine whether another extension, a redesignation, or a termination is warranted, in full compliance with the INA. Additional information on the extension of TPS for Syria can be found in Secretary Nielsen's January 31, 2018 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*.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The co-signers of your letter will receive separate, identical responses. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L.F.C.", written over a horizontal line.

L. Francis Cissna
Director