

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 18, 2017

Honorable Elaine C. Duke  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

On May 24, 2017, your predecessor, Secretary John F. Kelly, issued a notice in the Federal Register announcing a six month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), from July 22, 2017 through January 22, 2018, for eligible Haitian nationals residing in the United States. We write today to encourage you to exercise your authority under Section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254(a)) to extend TPS for Haitian nationals for an additional 18 months at the conclusion of the most recent six month extension.

TPS is central to our country's commitment in providing safe haven to individuals unable to securely return to their home country due to ongoing violence, environmental disasters, or other extraordinary conditions. Haiti continues to face such conditions. The ongoing extraordinary conditions that Haiti confronts today are a direct result of the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that hit Haiti on January 12, 2010 and the major hurricane that hit Haiti on October 4, 2016. The earthquake caused massive environmental disasters and directly affected an estimated 3,000,000 people, nearly one-third of Haiti's population. Additionally, the earthquake caused massive destruction to Haiti's infrastructure including government buildings, hospitals, schools, and vital aid offices. The ensuing destruction also created fertile conditions for the spread of cholera that has resulted in the deaths of 9,000 Haitians.

Haiti's recovery efforts have been further complicated by Hurricane Matthew last fall. Hurricane Matthew was the worst hurricane to hit the country in 50 years, taking the lives of over 1,000 people and directly affecting 2.1 million Haitians. The hurricane also resulted in the internal displacement of 175,000 people and left 1.4 million in need of urgent humanitarian aid. In addition to its human toll, it is estimated that Hurricane Matthew resulted in damage that will cost Haiti at least \$1 billion or about 11.4 percent of its gross domestic product. This includes extensive damage to Haiti's roadways, bridges, buildings, and critical infrastructure. As the Federal Register notice for the latest extension indicated, "significant losses of crops and livestock in the regions damaged by Hurricane Matthew impacted the entire country." Haiti's agricultural sector was hit particularly hard with crop losses estimated to be \$360 million. Furthermore, as noted by Secretary Kelly in his May 24, 2017 extension of TPS, "the damage from Hurricane Matthew and the recent heavy rains are compounding the existing food insecurity experienced by an estimated 3.2 million people."<sup>1</sup>

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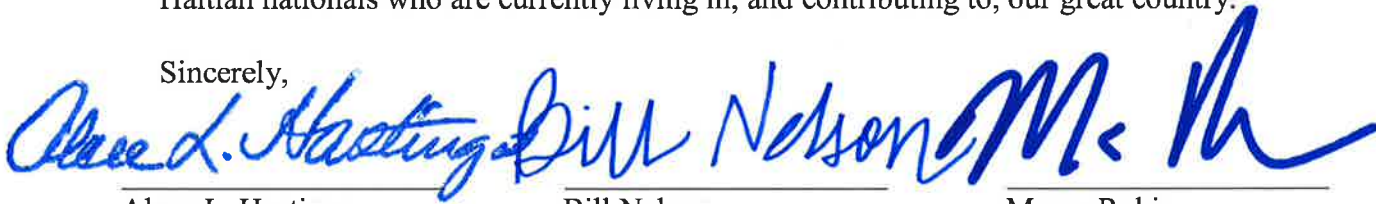
<sup>1</sup> "Extension of the Designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status," 82 Federal Register 99 (May 24, 2017), p. 23832.

Additionally, although reports are still coming in regarding Hurricane Irma's impact on Haiti, we would note that the hurricane hit northern Haiti on September 7, 2017, flooding rivers, destroying crops and homes and further eroding critical infrastructure in rural areas, which has led to many villages being cut off from nearby cities.

The Haitian people, and now their government, continue to work diligently to rebuild the country after the earthquake, cholera outbreak, and Hurricane Matthew. This work will be made more difficult if the country must also welcome back over 50,000 Haitian nationals at once. Though some statistics may look encouraging at first glance, a closer look shows a country still struggling significantly to recover from the extraordinary conditions noted above. For instance, although a high percentage of camps for internally displaced persons may have been shut down this does not mean that the people residing in those camps are now in safe and stable housing. Indeed, as Secretary Kelly stated, many of those who are no longer in camps "have moved back to unsafe homes or relocated to informal settlements located in hazardous areas."<sup>2</sup> Additionally, even with people leaving these camps for unsafe homes and informal settlements, over 55,000 people remain in 31 camps for internally displaced persons. Those living in these camps face gender-based violence and an overall lack of personal security.<sup>3</sup>

The Government of Haiti has outlined plans to rebuild the country and boost economic activity, and the United States remains steadfast in assisting Haiti. In order to allow for the full implementation of these efforts, and given the ongoing extraordinary conditions in Haiti, we urge you to extend the TPS designation for 18 months, within all applicable rules and regulations, for Haitian nationals who are currently living in, and contributing to, our great country.

Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

Bill Nelson  
United States Senator

Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart  
Members of Congress

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid



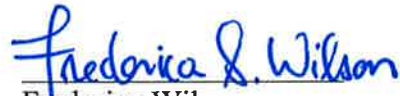
Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo  
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson  
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress