

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

May 3, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

SCANNED/RECEIVED  
BY EXEC SEC  
2018 MAY -3 PM 3:21

Dear Secretary Nielsen,

We write to strongly urge you to renew the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Honduras an additional eighteen months.

As you know, in 1998, the people of Honduras faced a series of natural disasters that left their country devastated. Hurricane Mitch damaged infrastructure and agricultural plantations, severely damaging Honduras's economy, destroying about 50 years of development<sup>1</sup>, and killing over 10,000 people.

Honduras's recovery has been largely stagnant, despite the efforts of the United States and international community. Honduras is considered one of the most violent countries in the world and job opportunities are scarce. Over the past few months, the conditions in Honduras have become more dangerous and volatile due to well-documented irregularities in Honduras' November presidential election. The government responded to large-scale protests with excessive and lethal force, as documented by the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, resulting in increased instability in the country.

Conditions have not improved to the point where the nearly 60,000 TPS recipients can be safely and fully reintegrated into Honduran society. Furthermore, Honduran TPS recipients work hard and contribute to the U.S. economy and our local communities. They have started families and opened businesses.

We strongly urge you to consider all of these factors and renew TPS for Honduras. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson Jr.  
Member of Congress

<sup>1</sup> Christian Aid, In debt to disaster: What happened to Honduras after Hurricane Mitch, October 31, 1999, <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/debt-disaster-what-happened-honduras-after-hurricane-mitch>



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

June 7, 2018

The Honorable Keith Ellison  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Ellison:

Thank you for your May 3, 2018 letter. Secretary Nielsen asked that I respond on her behalf.

The Secretary of Homeland Security's authority to designate a country for Temporary Protected Status (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.

Prior to the current expiration date for an existing TPS designation, the Secretary of Homeland Security reviews conditions in the foreign country and, after consultation with other appropriate federal agencies, determines whether the statutory conditions for TPS continue to be met. Under the INA, if the Secretary determines that the conditions for designation continue to be met with respect to a given country, the Secretary extends the designation. But if the Secretary determines that the conditions are no longer met with respect to that country, she is required to terminate the designation. Additional information regarding TPS designations is available in the *Federal Register* and on the USCIS website. Recent TPS decisions are the subject of ongoing litigation; therefore, we are unable to comment further.

Thank you again for your letter and for your interest in this important matter. Representative Johnson, who co-signed your letter, will receive a separate, identical response. 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 blue ink that reads "L. Francis Cissna".

L. Francis Cissna  
Director