



## Committee on Migration

**c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB**

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December 14, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration (USCCB/COM), I write to urge you to work in a bipartisan manner to pass legislation to protect Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients. We are encouraged by the recent introduction of H.R. 4184, the "Extending Status Protection for Eligible Refugees with Established Residency Act of 2017" (ESPERER Act); H.R. 4384, the "Act to Sustain the Protection of Immigrant Residents Earned through TPS Act of 2017" (ASPIRE-TPS Act); and H.R. 4253, the "American Promise Act of 2017".

TPS is a renewable and statutorily-authorized immigration status that allows individuals to remain and work lawfully in the U.S. during a period in which it is deemed unsafe for nationals of that country to return home. Currently, there are approximately 320,000 TPS recipients in the U.S. with an estimated 270,000 U.S. Citizen children. Many of these individuals have been here for years; they are business owners, professionals and community leaders. We know these individuals to be hardworking contributors to American communities, Catholic parishes and our nation.

To the Church, the future of TPS recipients and their loved ones is both an issue of family unity and human dignity. We are also responding to the call of Pope Francis who exhorts Catholics to act in solidarity with refugees, migrants, and all those seeking safety from the ravages of violence, environmental disasters, and despair.

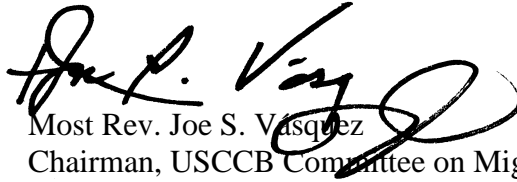
The time for Congress to act is now. Recently, the Department of Homeland Security terminated TPS for Nicaragua, Haiti, and Sudan, and it will be making the decision to extend or terminate TPS for El Salvador in January 2018 and for Honduras in May 2018. Yet, as discussed in the recent USCCB Migration and Refugee Services trip reports, "Temporary Protected Status: A Vital Piece of the Central American Protection and Prosperity Puzzle" and "Haiti's Ongoing Road to Recovery: The Necessity of an Extension of Temporary Protected Status," we know that many of these countries are unable to adequately and safely handle the return and reintegration of their nationals with TPS at this time.

The aforementioned bills offer legislative solutions to addressing the protection needs of TPS recipients' and their families. For example, the ESPERER Act will allow eligible recipients from Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, and their qualifying beneficiaries, to apply for adjustment of status to lawful permanent residency. This bill will prevent such hardworking

individuals from having their lives uprooted and their families torn apart. We hope you will consider co-sponsoring H.R. 4184.

Finding a legislative solution for TPS recipients and their families is critical for humanitarian and regional stability. The Catholic Church stands ready to work with Congress and will continue to welcome TPS recipients into our parishes and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe S. Vasquez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Most Rev. Joe S. Vasquez  
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration