



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

3211 Fourth Street NE • Washington DC 20017-1194

202-541-3065 • fax 202-722-8805 • email mrs@uscgb.org • www.usccb.org/mrs

October 10, 2017

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to transmit the following report by Migration and Refugee Services entitled “Temporary Protected Status: A Vital Piece of the Central American Protection and Prosperity Puzzle.”

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) allows individuals to remain and work lawfully in the U.S. during a period in which it is deemed unsafe for these individuals to return to their home country due to natural disaster, armed conflict, or other extraordinary conditions. Currently, there are an estimated 320,000 individuals living in the U.S. with TPS and many have children who are U.S. citizens and some have been here for over twenty years.

Starting this fall, the Administration will make decisions whether to extend TPS for a number of countries, including Honduras, Haiti, and El Salvador. As this report indicates, there is ample evidence to suggest that current TPS recipients from Honduras and El Salvador cannot return safely to their home country at this time. While improvements in the existing protection systems have been made by both Honduras and El Salvador, great concern remains about the ability to ensure protection and safety to those who would be forced to return, as well as to existing vulnerable people currently living in El Salvador and Honduras.

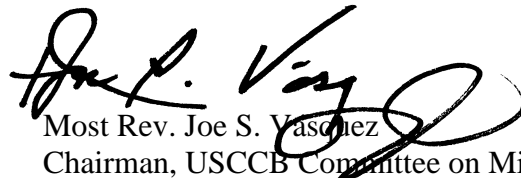
We believe our nation has a moral responsibility to provide continued temporary protection until TPS holders’ return and reintegration can be safely accomplished. TPS recipients are an integral part of the fabric of our community. They worship in our churches, they own homes and businesses and make important contributions to our economy. Extending TPS serves [an important humanitarian role by providing for the safety, well-being and stability](#) of recipients.

TPS is a vital family issue for the Catholic Church and if not extended approximately 270,000 U.S. citizen children face being separated from their families. We want to ensure that families can stay together and that they have a chance to succeed. Separating families and sending people to exploitative situations in the countries where they have never been to or where they have not lived for nearly 20 years is against basic principles of human dignity and mercy.

As Catholics, we uphold justice, the common good and the human dignity of every person. We are also responding to the call of Pope Francis who exhorts all Catholics to act in solidarity with refugees, migrants and all those who seek shelter and safety from the ravages of violence, environmental disasters, hunger and despair.

As you read this report, I urge you to keep the people of El Salvador and Honduras, including TPS recipients, in your thoughts and prayers. I encourage you to engage the Administration in requesting a TPS extension for El Salvador and Honduras so as to ensure continued protection for vulnerable people living in the U.S. I also encourage you to reach out to your elected Congressional leaders to request they support a legislative solution for TPS recipients who have been in the United States for many years. Lastly, I urge you to continue to welcome and accompany TPS recipients and all immigrants and refugees into your communities, places of worship, and homes.

Sincerely yours,

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