



Committee on Migration

c/o Migration and Refugee Services, USCCB

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April 10, 2019

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration (USCCB/COM), I write to urge you to support S. 879 the "Safe Environment from Countries Under Repression and Emergency Act" (or the "SECURE Act"). This legislation, introduced on March 26, 2019 by Senator Chris Van Hollen (D- MD), will protect Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders and provide them with a pathway to lawful permanent resident status.

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. DED is a discretionary and temporary stay of removal that is granted by the President to individuals from designated countries. There are approximately 320,000 TPS holders in the U.S. who have recently experienced cancellation of the TPS designation for their home country and are now reliant on ongoing litigation to allow them to remain legally in the United States. These TPS holders are parents to over 273,000 U.S. Citizen children living here in the United States. Similarly, up to 4,000 Liberians are facing termination of DED, effective on March 30, 2020, unless litigation challenging the decision prevails. Many of these TPS and DED holders 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.

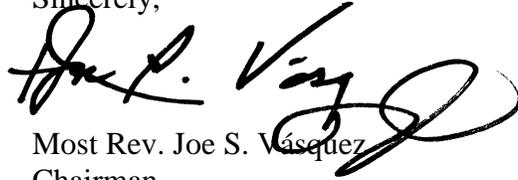
We believe the future of TPS and DED holders and their loved ones is a family unity and human dignity issue. We are also responding to the call of Pope Francis who exhorts Catholics to act in solidarity with refugees, migrants, and all those seeking safety from the ravages of violence, environmental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

The SECURE Act will allow individuals who had or were eligible for TPS from any country that has had a TPS designation, or who was in the U.S. under a grant of DED extended beyond September 28, 2016, to move forward with lawful permanent resident status if they have been continuously present in the U.S. for at least three years and are present upon application; or, for those removed on or after September 28, 2016, was continuously present in the U.S. for at least three years prior to their removal or voluntary departure. Eligible individuals must also meet all current criminal and national security requirements for admissibility and pass a background check. The bill would allow them to work legally during the pendency of their applications.

Finding a legislative solution for TPS and DED holders 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 and DED holders and their families into our parishes and communities.

Sincerely,

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

Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez
Chairman
USCCB Committee on Migration