



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

Nov. 15, 2017

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

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations to express our concern about the community of Haitians living in the U.S. and to urge you to approve an 18-month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for this vulnerable population.

As an organization guided by the social teachings of the Catholic Church, CHA affirms that each person is created in the image of God, and that each human life is sacred and possesses inalienable worth. In their 2003 pastoral letter on immigration *Strangers No Longer*, the bishops of the United States remind us that immigrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity which should be respected. There are currently some 50,000 Haitian TPS holders currently living and working in the U.S., many of them in health care settings where they help meet the needs of those seeking care and comfort. TPS status has been extremely important for them, particularly following the devastating earthquake in 2010. Our Catholic health ministry was made immediately aware of the effects of the earthquake on the infrastructure and social safety net of Haiti, and many of our health care organizations helped contribute to efforts led by Catholic Relief Services and the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince to rebuild St. Francis de Sales Hospital in the capital. Still, the effects of the earthquake, followed by Hurricane Matthew in 2016 and two additional storms just two months ago, continue to make living conditions there quite desperate. Despite the efforts and progress made by the Haitian people and the international community, the unprecedented events of the past seven years have left the nation unstable and unable to accommodate a flood of new arrivals.

Along with our partners in the Catholic community, CHA believes that the just and compassionate solution is to provide an 18-month extension for Haitian TPS holders. This would allow them to continue contributing to our nation and its workforce in safety, while also giving Haiti more time to rebuild and strengthen its infrastructure. Haitian TPS holders contribute millions of dollars every year to the U.S. economy, and sent over \$1 billion of their earnings back to family members in Haiti in 2015 alone as the nation continues to rebuild. Extending their TPS status is not just the moral and compassionate thing to do, it is also a good economic decision that benefits the interests of the U.S. and Haiti as well.



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TPS status was instituted to provide protection in our great nation for those whose homeland has become unsafe, precisely the condition that continues in Haiti today. I urge you again to provide the 18-month extension for Haitians and allow them to continue their hard work in raising their families, caring for our citizens and helping to rebuild a nation that will be able to welcome them back safely.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr Carol Keehan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO

cc: L. Francis Cissna
Director, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services