

## Talking Points on Save TPS for El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua

### #SaveTPS Talking Points

*Build a complete narrative around the urgent need to #SaveTPS by incorporating talking points from each of these categories, in this order. Lead with shared values, shed light on systemic failures and shared challenges, and end with a solution.*

#### 1. LEAD WITH SHARED VALUES:

- The United States values the rights of people everywhere to live free from fear for their safety and the security of their families.
- The Trump administration has underscored these values by investing \$1.8B in Central America to begin to work towards stability, security, and economic growth in what has been a very volatile region.
- But at the same time, the administration has signaled its intentions to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a nearly 30-year-old program, which has allowed more than 300K people—most from Central America and the Caribbean—to avoid the instability and insecurity of their home countries and instead build safe, productive lives with permission to live and work in the United States.

#### 2. DISCUSS SYSTEMIC FAILURES:

- TPS was created as a stop-gap measure nearly 30 years ago because our immigration system did not have a way to support people who were in the US when something catastrophic—like war, famine or a natural disaster—happened in their home country and prevented their safe return.
- Over the years, as conditions in their home countries have not improved, many TPS beneficiaries have stayed, with our permission, and built lives in the US. They have worked hard (88% participate in the labor force), built businesses (11% are self-employed), purchased homes (30% have mortgages), and raised families (Salvadoran, Honduran and Haitian TPS holders are parents to 273K US-citizen children). Every 18 months, they have re-registered with the government and been subject to comprehensive security screenings to renew their TPS status.
- For nearly 30 years, Congress has failed to take the steps to update this intentionally “stop-gap” measure into a permanent immigration program. TPS families have lived in limbo, but they have complied with the rules and, until now, have never been asked to leave.

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- By the end of 2017, TPS programs for Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Haiti will come up for renewal, and the Department of Homeland Security has signaled that they will not be renewed. One program, for Sudan, has already been cancelled.

## 3. INCLUDE SHARED CHALLENGES:

- **Families:** Sending TPS beneficiaries back to the unstable conditions in their home countries presents grave concerns for families. Parents will be faced with impossible decisions about whether to be separated from their US citizen children or bring them into harm's way. Those who opt to return home will likely be subject to violence and the targets of extortion, a reality that saps \$600M from families in El Salvador and Honduras each year.
- **Economy:** Cancelling TPS also has negative economic effects for the United States. TPS holders are important parts of our country's healthcare, construction, and childcare workforces. It would cost US employers nearly \$1B to replace these workers and retrain new ones—and it would cost US taxpayers \$3B to deport them.
- **Security and Stability:** Cancelling TPS also compromises the remittance money that TPS holders have sent to support family and friends over the years. Removing this economic lifeline—which represents a 17% of the GDP in El Salvador and Honduras—where few other economic opportunities exist will push people to either organized crime or to migrate to the United States, further destabilizing the region.

## 4. END WITH SOLUTIONS:

- Ending TPS is not a practical, nor is it a humane solution, especially as the net result would be even more destabilization of the region and migration trends to the United States.
- But to simply continuing to offer temporary and transitory reprieves to people who have become a permanent part of our communities and economies is not a solution either. Congress should be pressured to do what is right and formalize what these individuals are: Permanent residents of the US.
- In the meantime, DHS should extend the program until Congress passes a lasting solution for a population who have earned the condition of permanent residents in our country.

*Here is a short-hand metaphor to incorporate these elements in a brief message:*

Our immigration system is out-of-synch with our nation's commitment to supporting people in humanitarian crises: TPS was always a Band-Aid solution to this larger systemic problem. Now, in potentially cancelling this lifesaving program, we are removing that Band-Aid even as the wound has not yet healed. For nearly 30 years, Congress has failed to build a permanent solution for families in limbo. An extension of TPS is an important start in building an immigration system that both serves our economic needs and honors our humanitarian responsibilities.