

DC Council calls on Congress to extend protection for recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

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Washington, DC - Council Chairman Phil Mendelson announces a public hearing before the Committee of the Whole on **PR 22-448**, the "Sense of the Council in Support of Legislative Action to Protect Dreamers Resolution of 2017," and **PR 22-525**, the "Sense of the Council in Support of Legislative Action to Protect Temporary Protected Status Resolution of 2017." Both resolutions call on Congress to extend protections for recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients as well as for the 350,000 beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for nations currently included in the program.

Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, is a temporary, renewable program that provides relief from deportation and access to a work permit for certain migrants from 13 countries who may not meet the legal definition of refugee but who cannot safely return to their country of origin due to crises such as war or natural disaster. TPS beneficiaries include people from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua, as well as people from some African nations.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, is an immigration relief program created by President Barack Obama in 2012, providing a two-year renewable reprieve from deportation to individuals whose parents brought them illegally to the U.S. when they were children. Additionally, the program allows these individuals to study, work, and obtain a driver's license. If Congress does not pass legislation to protect DACA recipients, almost 800,000 individuals will be vulnerable to deportation. "DACA is the sole reason why I have been successful in the United States," said Gonzalo Núñez, current Georgetown University student. "Without DACA, my aspirations to work for the State Department and serve the United States of America, the only country that I know, would cease to exist. It is important for the Council to issue PR22-448 to push Congress to pass a bipartisan immigration reform bill quickly, before the dreams of nearly a million young adults come to an end."

In May 2017 the Federal Government announced the end of TPS for Haitians, with protections set to expire in January 2018. Immigrant advocates are concerned that by the end of this week, the Federal Government will announce the end of the program for Hondurans, Nicaraguans, and Salvadorans.

"Temporary Protected Status shelters people from returning to their countries that are experiencing ongoing armed conflicts, environmental disasters, or extraordinary life-threatening conditions," said Councilmember Kenyon McDuffie. "The 300,000 people under Temporary Protected Status are our neighbors and community members. They contribute to our culture, as well as contributing approximately \$4.5 billion to our country's economic growth annually. Congress should act so that the 300,000 people living in the United States legally under TPS protection can continue to do so."

The Washington Metropolitan Area has the second largest Salvadoran population and they represent the largest immigrant group in DC. According to the Salvadoran Embassy more than 40,000 Salvadoran nationals are protected with TPS. Industries such as health care and construction will be particularly impacted. Construction companies may lose up to 20% of their existing workforce making difficult to complete the existing construction projects in the area. But this is about more than numbers it is about the people that will be impacted. People like Karla, originally from El Salvador, Karla has lived in the United States since 1998, receiving TPS in 2001. Karla and her younger brother made the journey to reunite with their mother, who came a few months prior to work to give her children a better life. Karla is

the Lead Nurse for the Philadelphia area's largest home care facility, and ending TPS would separate Karla from her family and squash her future ambitions.

"The bottom line is that these regressive and damaging federal actions and policies make no sense. We will continue to push back, organize and advocate for policies that are responsive to our communities' needs. We are very proud of our local elected officials for their commitment to advancing commonsense policies, and the values of inclusion that make our city a city for all," said Abel Núñez, Executive Director of the Central American Resource Center-CARECEN of Washington, DC.

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