



**CITIES** *for* **ACTION**

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Rex Tillerson  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

January 3, 2018

Dear Secretary Nielsen and Secretary Tillerson:

We, the undersigned mayors and county executives, urge you to renew El Salvador's Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation before it comes due for extension on January 8, 2018. We write on behalf of our communities as well as Cities for Action, a national coalition of more than 175 cities and counties that advocate for policies that protect and support our immigrant residents. Most of the estimated 195,000 Salvadoran TPS holders live in metropolitan areas that are represented in our coalition. As local officials, it is our obligation to ensure all of our residents' safety and well-being, including those of immigrants and their families. We are gravely concerned that failure to renew El Salvador's TPS designation will harm hundreds of thousands of people in our communities.

Congress created TPS for circumstances in which a country's conditions are too dangerous to permit the safe return of a group of nationals, and El Salvador is a textbook example of such conditions. El Salvador was first designated for TPS status by the Bush Administration in 2001, after two devastating earthquakes. Its designation has been renewed at every juncture since because subsequent natural disasters have impeded the country's recovery and have given rise to unstable living conditions, including drought, housing shortages, poverty, and water shortages. In the security vacuum left by a government that struggles to address even its most basic infrastructural needs, violence and crime ravage the country. Activity by brutal gangs such as 18th Street and MS-13 is widespread, armed robbery is common, and the country has one of the world's highest murder rates. As the State Department human rights report from 2017 noted, one in five families in El Salvador claims to have been victims of violent crimes. Women and children have been particularly vulnerable to endemic sexual abuse and gender-based violence.



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The Salvadoran TPS recipients we represent have deep roots in our communities. Allowing their TPS status to expire will divide families and harm our cities. Salvadoran TPS recipients have lived in the United States for an average of 21 years and have 192,700 U.S.-born children. Salvadoran TPS recipients have an extremely high rate of participation in the labor force—88%. They contribute over \$3 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product. Of households with a Salvadoran TPS recipient, 34% have a mortgage. Our long-time Salvadoran residents are integral members of our neighborhoods and our cities depend on their critical contributions.

Ending TPS would send many of our long-time Salvadoran residents back to a country that cannot adequately handle the return of its nationals. Their removal would also harm hundreds of thousands of Americans, particularly their U.S. citizen children, as well as their neighbors, coworkers, and employers. We call upon the federal government to renew El Salvador's TPS designation for 18 months and protect our hardworking community members.

We urge you to continue protecting these longstanding members of our societies, who contribute so much to our communities and economies.

Sincerely,

Ed Pawlowski, Mayor of Allentown, PA

Steve Hogan, Mayor of Aurora, CO

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston, MA

Lydia Lavelle, Mayor of Carrboro, NC

Thomas G. Ambrosino, City Manager of Chelsea, MA

Rahm Emanuel, Mayor of Chicago, IL

Michael S. Rawlings, Mayor of Dallas, TX

Riley H. Rogers, Mayor of Dolton, IL

Sylvester Turner, Mayor of Houston, TX

Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles, CA

Paul R. Soglin, Mayor of Madison, WI

Megan Barry, Mayor of Nashville, TN



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Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York City, NY

Libby Schaaf, Mayor of Oakland, CA

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor of Saint Paul, MN

Sam Liccardo, Mayor of San José, CA

Ted Winterer, Mayor of Santa Monica, CA

Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor of Somerville, MA

Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, D.C.