

Legislation Text

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Urging President Donald Trump and Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke to protect thousands of Haitians living in Philadelphia and nationwide through the extension of Haiti's Temporary Protected Status designation beyond January 22, 2018.

WHEREAS, The 2010 Haiti earthquake, reaching 7.0 magnitude, shook the country to its core, leading to a death toll of between 220,000 and 316,000. Over 1.5 million people were initially and internally displaced; and

WHEREAS, As a response to the earthquake's devastation, President Obama and the Department of Homeland Security granted 58,000 Haitian nationals who were in the United States as of January 12, 2010 Temporary Protected Status (TPS), granting them temporary residence and refuge in the United States. This temporary status was extended to over 2,900 Haitians living in the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Currently nearly 240,000 Haitian earthquake victims remain displaced in camps and settlements. The cholera epidemic, spread by UN peacekeepers that responded to the earthquake, has since killed at least 10,000 and infected over 800,000 Haitians. Even more, October 2016's Hurricane Matthew took the lives of over 1,000 people, left hundreds of thousands without safe water or food, and further crippled the nation's infrastructure and agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Haiti's TPS has been continually renewed since its advent in 2010. Most recently, on May 22, 2017, the Department of Homeland Security extended Haiti's TPS designation for only six months, warning recipients to be prepared to return to Haiti. The status is thus scheduled to terminate on January 22, 2018; and

WHEREAS, When meeting with Haitian-American leaders at the Little Haiti Cultural Center in Miami in September 2016, President Trump remarked, "The Haitian people deserve better, so ... I will give them better. Today we begin a new chapter, together we will build a relationship based on mutual respect and friendship and love, and ... we will really do something very special with our commonly shared values, because we have lots of commonly shared values, maybe full shared values.... and whether you vote for me or don't vote me, I really want to be your greatest champion, and I will be your champion whether you vote for me or not.... we are going to do things for you folks that you have really deserved for a long time"; and

WHEREAS, Haiti's government--overwhelmed by the catastrophic effects of the 2010 earthquake, a cholera epidemic, Hurricane Matthew, and food insecurity--is struggling to cope and to deliver even the most basic life-sustaining services; and

WHEREAS, Before May 22, prior Haiti TPS extensions had always been for 18-month periods, based on an accurate assessment of Haitian conditions; and

WHEREAS, The 58,000 Haitians with TPS have been in the US since at least January 12, 2011, and have ties to community, family, and even children that were born in the US; and

WHEREAS, These 58,000 Haitians who are protected under TPS regularly send remittances which sustain

about 320,000 to 500,000 relatives in Haiti, totaling \$1.3 billion. This aid serves as Haiti's primary source of foreign assistance, and therefore Haitians who are protected by TPS are actively and meaningfully involved in Haitian disaster relief; and

WHEREAS, Haiti's history of resilience serves as a reminder of how a people can persevere against all odds. The first independent nation in Latin America and the first nation to renounce slavery, Haiti has a longstanding history of revolution and rebellion, speaking to the spirit of the Haitian people despite the momentous adversity that they have faced; now, therefore, be it

WHEREAS, Those from El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen residing in the US also heavily benefit from TPS protection, and extensions are also crucially needed for individuals from these countries; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Urges President Donald Trump and Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke to extend Haiti's TPS designation for no less than 18 months beyond its current January 22, 2018 expiration date.