

September 15, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
301 7th Street SW  
Washington, DC 2052

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

**RE: Temporary Protected Status for Immigrants from Central America**

President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, Secretary Blinken,

The undersigned organizations urge your administration to designate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala. This letter follows previous petitions from organizations and members of Congress since the start of your administration.<sup>1</sup> Redesignating TPS for Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and designating TPS for Guatemala must be considered as an essential part of the U.S. strategy to address the root causes of migration from Central America. TPS designations are also critical in the context of increasing climate-related disasters affecting the region. Not extending protections for TPS beneficiaries from Central America would have devastating impacts for TPS beneficiaries, their families, and communities in the United States, and potentially destabilize Central America further.

Designating Guatemala and redesignating TPS for Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua fits squarely within the authority of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State. TPS was created as a statute in 1990 to protect immigrants who are unable to return to their home countries because of situations of armed conflict, extraordinary circumstances which prevent governments from receiving their citizens safely, and natural disasters like back-to-back Hurricanes Eta and Iota that these countries experienced in November 2020 following a multi-year period of drought. The combination of the devastating impacts of the hurricanes on housing, public infrastructure, agriculture, with ongoing political and human rights crises, violence, economic downfall exacerbated by the pandemic, and a lack of adequate access to food, water, and health care, prevents nationals from returning safely and warrants a granting of new TPS designations. The government of Guatemala has requested TPS for its citizens due to the impacts of the 2020 hurricanes on more than one occasion,<sup>2</sup> and the new government of Honduras has also requested TPS for its citizens,<sup>3</sup> another necessary condition for the granting of TPS for natural disasters according to U.S. law.

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<sup>1</sup> Rep. Castro, Espaillat Bipartisan [Letter](#) to President Biden, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, May 2022, Senator Menendez, Senate Democrats [Letter](#) to Secretary Mayorkas and Secretary Blinken, January 2022, Rep. Velazquez (D-NY) [Letter](#) to DHS Sec. Mayorkas and Sec. of State Blinken, Feb. 2021; Rep. Sires (D-NJ) and Rep. Torres (D-CA) [Letter](#) to President Biden, Jan. 2021; NGO [Letter](#) to President-elect Joseph Biden, Dec. 2020; Senator Kaine, Senator Warner, Senator Cardin, Senator Van Hollen [Letter](#) to Sec. Mayorkas, Dec. 2020

<sup>2</sup> President Giammattei [requests](#) TPS for Guatemalan citizens with DHS Secretary Mayorkas, June 2022, Guatemalan Foreign Minister [requests](#) TPS with Secretary of State Blinken, Oct. 2021, Guatemalan Foreign Minister [requests](#) TPS for Guatemalan citizens with U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala, Nov. 2020

<sup>3</sup> Honduran Foreign Minister requests TPS for Honduran citizens, February 2022,

<https://hondudiario.com/nacionales/canciller-hondureno-solicito-formalmente-nuevo-tps-para-los-compatriotas-en-eeuu/>

The lingering impact of the November 2020 hurricanes combined with the effects of climate change and the longer-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have worsened food insecurity and instability in Central America. Hurricanes Eta and Iota left an estimated 9.3 million people, including 3.5 million people affected, and forced to leave their communities.<sup>4</sup> As of July 2022, at least 8.4 million people require food assistance in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.<sup>5</sup> Inequalities have deepened in the region as people have been unable to recover from unemployment and impacts to their livelihoods due to the pandemic. Hurricane Bonnie that passed through Central America in July 2022, causing deaths in El Salvador and Nicaragua,<sup>6</sup> is the latest example of natural disasters impacting the region. As a new hurricane season begins, communities that have already been affected with loss of homes, livelihoods and the destruction of critical infrastructure from previous storms will again face the risk of flooding or devastation. TPS designation can help stabilize the region, allowing families to access vital resources through remittances sent by loved ones, while governments and international humanitarian organizations work to aid those harmed by natural disasters and already suffering the effects of the pandemic, as well as ongoing violence, poverty, and corruption. The growing crackdown against independent journalists and civil society organizations across Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador also exacerbates risks for individuals returning home.

The urgency of granting a new designation for current TPS beneficiaries from Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador in the United States cannot be overstated. Under the *Ramos v. Nielsen* and *Bhattarai v. Nielsen* lawsuits, the protection for TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua has been extended to December 31, 2022.<sup>7</sup> This is less than four months away. No one benefits by forcing TPS beneficiaries to continue living with this constant uncertainty and fear. Although extending their protections with new designations is not a permanent solution, it will allow TPS beneficiaries to continue to live and work in the United States in the short term and to send remittances to support their families in Central America suffering from the impacts of natural disasters, severe drought, the COVID-19 pandemic, and to strengthen those countries' economies—creating positive impacts for communities in the United States and boosting these countries' economies in Central America. Citizens abroad sent a total of \$24.5 billion in remittances to Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua in 2020 alone.<sup>8</sup> TPS would also benefit the U.S. economy as the majority of Central American TPS beneficiaries have resided in the United States for at least two decades and represent a strong workforce—many serving as essential workers during the pandemic.

We urge your administration to redesignate TPS for Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and designate TPS for Guatemala as soon as possible. While Congress must ultimately act to grant them permanent protections and a pathway to citizenship, the executive branch can act to extend their protections in the short term. TPS designations can be a core part of the humane and rights-based immigration and foreign policy that you have promised. It can help countries in Central America recover from natural disasters and strengthen immigrant communities in the United States.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/hurricanes-eta-and-iota>

<sup>5</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/mexico/echo-central-america-and-mexico-factsheet-1-july-2022>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/14/three-dead-hurricane-bonnie-passes-over-central-america>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/update-on-ramos-v-nielsen>

<sup>8</sup>

[http://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Migration the Economy and Remittances in Central America.pdf](http://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Migration%20the%20Economy%20and%20Remittances%20in%20Central%20America.pdf)

## **Signed organizations**

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers  
32BJ SEIU  
Access Living / Cambiando Vidas  
Adhikaar  
African Communities Together  
AFSCME Council 3  
Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ACIJ)  
Alabama Latino AIDS Coalition  
Alianza Americas  
America's Voice  
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
American Immigration Lawyers Association  
AMUSE - Asociación De Mujeres Salvadoreñas en el Exterior  
Arkansas United  
Armadillos Ni un Migrante Menos  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta  
Asociación de Guatemaltecos Sin Fronteras  
Baltimore Action Legal Team  
Brazen Legal, PLLC.  
Bridges Faith Initiative  
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition  
Care in Action  
CASA  
Casa de la Cultura El Salvador  
CASA in Action  
Casa Mary Johanna  
Casa Yurumein  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies  
Center for Community Change  
Center for Immigrant Progress  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Center for Victims of Torture  
Central American Black Organization  
Central American Resource Center of Los Angeles  
Central American Resource Center of Northern CA - CARECEN SF  
Central American Resource Center of Washington DC  
Centro Comunitario CEUS  
Centro Presente  
Centro Romero

Centro San Bonifacio  
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America-CRLN  
Church World Service  
CIELO- Comunidades Indígenas en liderazgo (CIELO)  
Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES)  
Citizens Policing Project  
Clerics of St. Viator Provincial Council  
Coalición de Derechos Humanos  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Colectivo de Desarrollo Transnacional de Michoacán  
Colectivo de Mujeres Transnacionales  
Communities Organizing Latinx Power and Action -COPAL Minnesota  
Community Asylum Seekers Project VT  
Community Change Action  
Community EsTr(EI/La)  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
CRECEN Houston  
Diáspora Hondureña Internacional (DHI)  
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel  
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Dominican Development Center  
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, DC  
Dreamers of Atl  
Durango Unido  
Equity Matters  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Everyday Canvassing  
Familias Unidas en Acción  
Families Belong Together  
FEDECMI - La Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois (Casa Michoacan)  
Fellowship Southwest  
FIRM Action  
First Congregational Church of SanJose  
First Focus on Children  
Florida Immigrant Coalition  
Fuerzas Unidas  
GALEO Impact Fund  
Global Women's Institute  
Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA  
Heartland Workers Center  
Haitian Bridge Alliance

Hispanic Federation  
Hondurans Against AIDS  
Hope Border Institute | Instituto Fronterizo Esperanza  
Houston America For All  
Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice (Maryland)  
Hub 450 Lancaster  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
Illinois Workers Action  
Immigrant Home Foundation  
Immigration Hub  
IMPACT Silver Spring  
Indivisible Howard County (Maryland)  
Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración (IMUMI)  
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio  
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)  
Jews United for Justice  
Justice in Motion  
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)  
La Colaborativa  
Latin American Association  
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)  
Latinas en Poder  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
Latino Policy Forum  
Latinos Progresando  
LCF Georgia  
Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle  
Lila LGBTQ, Inc.  
Living Hope Wheelchair Association  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)  
Make the Road Nevada  
Make the Road New York  
Making Changes  
Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU)  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
Memphis Interfaith Coalition for Action and Hope  
Miami Workers Center  
Michigan United  
Migrant Equity Southeast  
Mission Guatemala USA

Mothers On The Move  
Mundo Maya Foundation  
Muslim Voices Coalition  
NAACP, Prince George's County Branch  
NAPAC-GA  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Association of Social Workers-MD Chapter  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of Jewish Women -- Greater Long Beach & West Orange County (CA) Section  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Immigration Law Center (NILC)  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)  
National Partnership for New Americans  
Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala  
New York Immigration Coalition  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLA)  
OneAmerica  
Organizacion Maya K'Iche  
Organizing Black  
Our Revolution Maryland  
Oxfam America  
Pennsylvania Immigration & Citizenship Coalition  
PG Change Makers  
Poder Latinx  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Progressive Maryland  
Prince Georges County Peace and Justice Coalition  
Professorial Lecturer. George Washington Univ School Of Public Health and Health Services  
Protect the Vote GA  
Quixote Center  
Red de Pueblos Transnacionales  
Red Mexicana de Líderes y Organizaciones de Migrantes  
Refugee Law Center  
Refugees International  
Represent GA Action Network, Inc.  
Rural Women Health Project  
Salvadoran Association of Los Angeles (ASOSAL)  
Seeds of Resistance  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team  
Somos South Georgia

Southeast Immigrant Rights Network (SEIRN)  
St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church  
SURJ  
Sur Legal Collaborative  
Takoma Park Mobilization Equal Justice Committee  
Telpochacalli Community Education Project  
Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition  
The Advocates for Human Rights  
UFCW Local 400  
United Farm Workers  
UndocuBlack Network  
Unidos MN  
UnidosUS  
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
UNITE HERE  
United Congregations of Metro East  
United for a Fair Economy  
United Healthcare Workers East  
United We Dream Network  
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
VOICE MALE Magazine  
Washington Office on Latin America  
WeCount!  
Welcome House Raleigh  
WIN! The Welcome Immigrant Network  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center  
WOLC IMMIGRATION SERVICES  
Women Working Together U.S.A  
Women's Refugee Commission  
Working Families United





