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.¹ 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,² and the new government of Honduras has also requested TPS for its citizens,³ another necessary condition for the granting of TPS for natural disasters according to U.S. law.

² 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
³ Honduran Foreign Minister requests TPS for Honduran citizens, February 2022,
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. As of July 2022, at least 8.4 million people require food assistance in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. 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, 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 Bhattacharj v. Nielsen lawsuits, the protection for TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua has been extended to December 31, 2022. 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. 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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7 https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/update-on-ramos-v-nielsen
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(El/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