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Trump Administration Lets Down Haitian Community

Advocates say that Humanitarian Crisis in Haiti unlikely to be resolved in six months

MIAMI, FL - Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC) released the following statement upon the news that the Trump Administration had extended the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program for Haitians in the United States for six months.

The recent decision announced by the Department of Homeland Security to extend Temporary Protected Status for eligible Haitians only to January of 2018 totally ignores the island's current humanitarian crisis and will further destabilize the community here and abroad. It continues the Trump Administration's efforts to make life for immigrants in the U.S. more difficult, push them into the shadows and into the privately-run arms of prison detention centers.

Nearly 55,000 Haitian TPS recipients currently live in the United States, with about 50% living in Florida and contributing socially and economically to local communities. Expecting families and communities to be able to pick up and move back to a country whose recovery is at best questionable in just six months makes little sense in the real world, but shows the kind of judgement that has been present in a number of recent federal decisions. It's made even worse considering the promise that then-candidate Trump made with local leaders in Little Haiti, when he promised to be their "greatest champion."

Haitians abroad are already facing food insecurity, the cholera epidemic, and economic instability in their country - conditions that are unlikely to be resolved in the next six months. Recipients from other TPS countries like El Salvador face a similar unstable situations. Yet the Administration believes that sending these families back to these countries will not have an effect on local economies and services.

Forcing Haitians to return to a destabilized Haiti would cement an inhumane precedent. We call on Secretary Kelly to make an informed decision, based on the facts on the ground and extend TPS for a full 18 months. With hurricane season fast approaching, anything less would not only be irresponsible, but would further strain the social and economic fabric of the communities here and on the island.

