

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2017

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

The Honorable John Kelly
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretaries Tillerson and Kelly:

In light of continued difficult conditions in Haiti, we request that you extend the existing Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for certain Haitian nationals currently living in the United States, which is set to expire on July 22, 2017. An extension is necessary to allow Haiti to fully recover from the damage of the January 2010 earthquake and October 2016 hurricane, and to provide security to Haitians living in the United States.

More than seven years after the devastating earthquake and resulting humanitarian crisis, Haiti has yet to recover. That natural disaster left the country shattered, as it caused over 200,000 deaths, injured over 300,000, displaced millions more,¹ and caused an estimated \$7.8 billion in damages. The ensuing cholera epidemic further complicated recovery efforts, as it killed over 10,000 people and sickened more than 800,000.² Haiti's situation remains fragile, and the World Bank notes it is one of the poorest countries in the world and the poorest country in the Americas with a GDP per capita of \$846 in 2014.³ Indeed, the United Nations will continue to have a presence in the country by replacing its peacekeeping operation with a successor operation: the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011. Accessed April 12, 2017.

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5951a1.htm?s_cid=mm5951a1_w.

² Gladstone, Rick. "Lawmakers Urge John Kerry to Press U.N. for Haiti Cholera Response." *The New York Times*. July 29, 2016. Accessed April 12, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/30/world/americas/haiti-cholera-john-kerry-congress.html?_r=0.

³ World Bank Group. Last Updated April 11, 2017. Accessed April 12, 2017. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/haiti/overview>.

Hurricane Matthew only compounded slow recovery efforts. The hurricane made landfall on the Western Coast of Haiti on October 4, 2016, and it brought sustained winds of 145 miles per hour, up to 25 inches in rainfall, and over 10 feet in storm surge. The storm affected 2.1 million people, including nearly 900,000 children, and 1.4 million people required humanitarian assistance.⁴ According to estimates by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other partners studying the damage, the storm caused nearly \$2 billion in damage; or roughly 22% of Haiti's GDP.⁵ The storm virtually guaranteed that Haiti's post-earthquake recovery will be extended for years to come.

Haiti is ill-equipped to handle the return of the roughly 50,000 Haitian nationals currently receiving TPS. TPS was created to offer temporary, humane protection to foreign nationals living in the U.S. when extraordinary conditions in their home country pose a serious threat to their personal safety. We welcomed the previous extension of TPS for Haitian nationals, and we believe the reports of widespread damage and destruction in Haiti make an extended TPS designation appropriate.

Given Haiti's many challenges, the United States' focus should be to prioritize disaster assistance and recovery, not to return Haitian nationals to a country lacking the capacity to support them. We ask that you take the urgent humanitarian situation into account when considering extending the TPS designation.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,


Robert Menendez
United States Senator


Bill Nelson
United States Senator

⁴ Relief Web. "WFP Haiti Situation Report #41." March 3, 2017. Accessed April 12, 2017. <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP%20Haiti%20Situation%20Report%20%2341%20%2803%20March%202017%29.pdf>

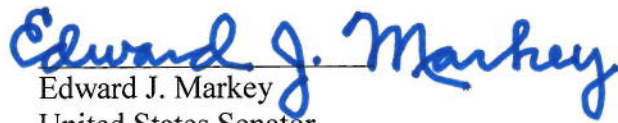
⁵ Relief Web. "New World Bank Grant to Benefit Thousands of Haitian Students after Hurricane Matthew." November 10, 2016. Accessed April 12, 2017. <http://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/new-world-bank-grant-benefit-thousands-haitian-students-after-hurricane-matthew>.



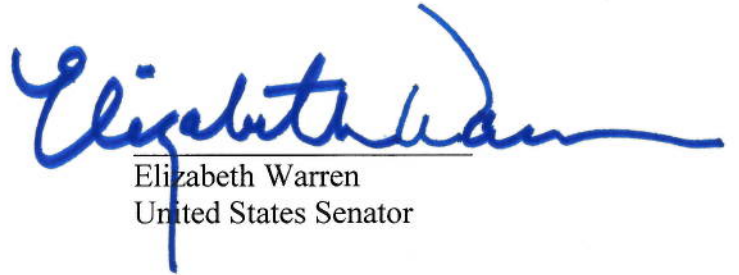
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



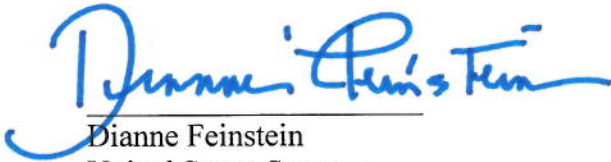
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



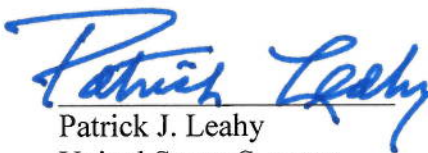
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



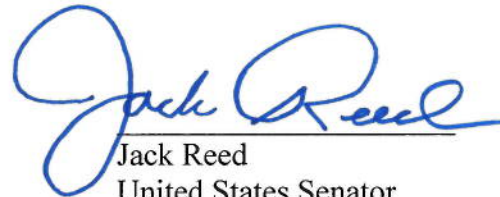
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



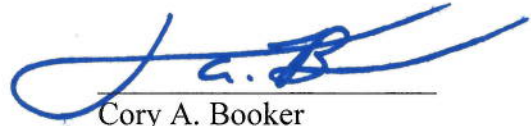
Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator