A group of Democratic senators sent a letter today to Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly urging him to renew a humanitarian relief program for Haitians in the U.S. — and to follow statutory guidelines when making his decision.

The lawmakers, led by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), want Kelly to extend "temporary protected status" for an estimated 50,000 Haitians in the U.S. The status, offered to nationals of a country following a natural disaster, armed conflict or other "extraordinary" event, was granted to Haiti in 2010, but expires in July.

In the letter, lawmakers expressed worry that Kelly might use data about criminality and receipt of public benefits to make his decision. Menendez and four other Democratic senators stressed that a renewal of TPS should be based on the conditions in the country, not data about behavior in the U.S.

"Any other considerations are not congressionally authorized and would create a new barrier not found in law," they wrote.