

PoliticoPro

By Ted Hesson

05/19/2017 11:37 AM EDT

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.