



For Immediate Release

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**Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson's Statement on the
Extension of Haiti's Temporary Protected Status Designation**

Washington, D.C. – *Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson issued the following statement in response to the six-month extension of Haiti's Temporary Protected Status designation:*

“Following a meeting last week with Haitian Senators Wilfrid Gélin and Wanique Pierre, I decided to wage a Twitter storm in a last-ditch effort to save the nation's Temporary Protected Status designation. We invited the Haitian diaspora and international community to participate in the storm, during which we tagged the Department of Homeland Security and urged followers to call the agency to demand that the program be saved. This morning DHS called my office to inform us that Haiti's TPS designation has received a six-month extension.

“While this news will give the tens of thousands of Haitians anxiously waiting to learn the program's fate some measure of relief, this is in fact a cup half full situation.

“The reality is that in six months Haiti will still be in no position to absorb and aid 58,000 unemployed people. It will still be recovering from the 2010 earthquake and the subsequent cholera epidemic imported by U.N. peacekeepers that has killed 10,000. And it will still be struggling to rebuild the extensive damage its infrastructure incurred after Hurricane Matthew struck the island-nation last October.

“During this six-month reprieve, I invite DHS officials to join me on a trip to Haiti so they can view firsthand exactly what Haitian natives living in the U.S. with temporary protected status would be returning to. It is one thing to read facts and figures about the effects of a series of natural disasters that have wreaked havoc there, but it is impossible to accurately assess the tumultuous conditions without actually seeing it up close and in person.

“The U.S. doesn't have an ambassador in Haiti to keep our government abreast of the situation on the ground. I have traveled to Haiti several times. For a person not known for being at a loss for words, I find it difficult to describe how gut-wrenchingly sad and difficult life is there. People are still living in tent cities, years after the earthquake, and thanks to the hurricane the nation is also dealing with a food crisis.

“Department of Homeland Security officials will not be able to fairly or accurately judge the need to continue Haiti's TPS status unless they join me and other congressional leaders on a fact-finding mission that I am confident will convince them of the program's merits and the desperate need for it to continue. I invite them to do so.”

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Congresswoman Frederica S. Wilson is a fourth-term Congresswoman from Florida representing parts of Northern Miami-Dade and Southeast Broward counties. A former state legislator and school principal, she is the founder of the 5000 Role Models for Excellence Project, a mentoring program for young males at risk of dropping out of school. Congresswoman Wilson also founded and chairs the Florida Ports Caucus, a bipartisan taskforce that coordinates federal action in support of Florida's harbors and waterways. The Florida lawmaker sits on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Education and the Workforce Committee.