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November 14, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Duke:

I am writing in connection with the determinations now before you concerning the immigration status of citizens of Haiti, El Salvador, and Honduras who are lawfully present in the United States under Temporary Protected Status (TPS). As the current TPS authorizations for these three countries come up for review in the coming months, I urge you to recognize the unsuitability of ordering tens of thousands of Haitians, Salvadorans, and Hondurans now in the United States to return to homelands that are in crisis and that will be at risk of becoming further destabilized by a sudden influx of TPS nationals.

There are approximately 5,000 Haitians, 6,000 Salvadorans, and almost 1,000 Hondurans now living and working in Massachusetts under TPS. These are overwhelmingly hard-working people who make valuable contributions to the economy and culture of our State. Our experience in Massachusetts is borne out by national measures that track workforce participation in the U.S. economy for these three groups at over 80%. As you know, TPS workers are authorized to work by DHS and pay their full share of social security and other payroll taxes like other American workers. Losing Massachusetts' 12,000 TPS residents and workers would deal a huge blow to our State economy. Meanwhile, many of the nationals from Haiti, El Salvador, and Honduras here under TPS have U.S.-born children who have no connection to their parents' country of origin. Our immigration policy should protect the integrity of these families.

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Independent evaluations offer strong support for the conclusion that Haiti, El Salvador, and Honduras are countries that remain in crisis and lack the resources, political stability, and infrastructure necessary to support the return of nationals now living in the United States under TPS.

It is not consistent with the traditions and values of the United States to order the return of large numbers of foreign nationals who have been following our laws and contributing to our economy and culture to countries that are dangerous, politically unstable, and incapable of providing basic services and protections for their citizens. I understand that apart from extending TPS, immigration law provides you with other means of protecting these individuals from the dangers of returning them to unstable homelands. I encourage you to explore all reasonable alternatives and to reach a solution that will allow Haitians, Salvadorans, and Hondurans now lawfully present in the United States under TPS to remain.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles D. Baker", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Charles D. Baker
Governor