

Groups From Alaska, Maine and Worldwide Urge Senators Murkowski and Collins to Take the Next Step to Protect Haitian Women and Girls from Sexual Assault

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Portland, ME and Juneau, AK: Groups in Alaska and Maine delivered a [letter](#) yesterday to their Senators, Susan Collins (R-ME) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), urging them to follow up their previous support for women and girls at risk of sexual assault in Haiti by co-sponsoring [S. 4814](#), a bill that would provide three years of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti. The letter, also signed by 148 organizations worldwide, notes that reinstating TPS would protect 350,000 Haitians—half of them women and girls—from deportation to a Haiti suffering from pervasive gang violence that includes horrific levels of brutal sexual assaults.

In February of this year, Senators Murkowski and Collins were lead sponsors of [Senate Resolution 599](#), which “*condemn[ed] the systematic sexual violence and other gender-based harms directed at women and girls in Haiti and the accompanying lack of protection, services, and accountability.*” Today, the risk of extreme violence for women and girls in Haiti is [even higher](#) than it was in February. The other two lead sponsors of Resolution 599, Senators Jacky Rosen (D-NV) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) have co-sponsored S. 4814.

Lisa Parisio, Policy Director at the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP) in Maine said: “Ensuring that Haitian TPS holders are protected from life-threatening conditions and able to continue living and working at their homes in the U.S. had broad bipartisan support in the House and should in the Senate, too. Ripping people from their families, communities, and jobs is causing needless and unjustifiable harm on all levels and is squarely against the best interest of Maine and the country. By restoring TPS for Haiti, this bill will safeguard human life, keep families together, and protect our workforce and businesses in Maine and beyond.”

TPS is an immigration protection established by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that allows nationals of designated countries to stay and work in the US when natural disasters, civil unrest or other conditions make it unsafe for them to return home. DHS originally designated Haiti for TPS following the country’s January 2010 earthquake. Most recently, TPS [was renewed](#) in 2024 due to escalating gang violence and other factors.

Bruce Botelho of the Juneau Sponsor Circle noted that “S.4814 embodies some of the highest ideals of our nation: compassion and protection of human dignity. Removal of TPS status subjects countless thousands of Haitians to intolerable and, in many cases, life-threatening

conditions. It simultaneously deprives our society of the substantial contributions Haitians have made to our communities across the spectrum of occupations and professions.”

Diana Duarte, Chief Strategy Officer, Advocacy & Policy of MADRE added that "In Haiti, our local partners have repeatedly sounded the alarm that armed gangs are subjecting women and girls to [systematic sexual and gender-based violence](#) and terrorizing entire communities. If TPS is not reinstated, and Haitians living in the United States today are forced to return to Haiti, the US will be knowingly sending Haitian women and girls into a security crisis."

DHS terminated TPS on August 5, following delays from court challenges, and has [deported over 450 Haitians](#) since. In April, Republicans and Democrats in the House of Representatives [approved](#) a 3-year Haiti TPS extension and sent the bill to the Senate. [S. 4814](#) now has 46 co-sponsors. Public opinion polling shows [broad support](#) from Americans for Haiti TPS beneficiaries.