

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0520

December 8, 2017

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The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
650 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

I write to strongly urge you to renew the temporary protected status (TPS) designation for El Salvador. Nearly 49,100 Salvadorans live and work in California and ending this critical designation would upend the lives of thousands of legal immigrants and their U.S.-born children who have legally worked and contributed to our nation.

As you near the expiration date to El Salvador's TPS designation, I ask you to carefully consider the current challenges facing El Salvador's ability to provide basic services to its people, as well as its political instability. Moreover, I ask that you keep in mind the economic contributions TPS recipients have made to the United States, and the economic impact rescinding TPS would have on local economies throughout the United States.

In early 2001, two major earthquakes claimed the lives of over 1,000 people, caused over 8,000 injuries, and affected the lives of over 1.5 million citizens of El Salvador. The earthquakes also significantly damaged El Salvador's transportation infrastructure, health facilities, housing schools, and businesses. In response to the devastation caused by the 2001 earthquakes, the Bush Administration rightly granted temporary protected status (TPS) to migrants from El Salvador. This important designation has since been extended to El Salvador 13 times as the country struggles to rebuild its critical infrastructure.

El Salvador continues to face a myriad of challenges following the 2001 earthquakes. Progress has been slow in repairing the 340,000 homes lost in the earthquakes, and the country faces a major housing shortage. Food insecurity and a lack of potable water and electricity remain serious inhibitors to the country's development. Transnational organized crime and gang activity exacerbate El Salvador's high rates of murder, extortion and robbery. Almost a third of Salvadorans live in poverty and an equal number of the country's work force is underemployed or unable to find full time work. Conditions have not significantly improved since the last time the Department of Homeland Security determined that "El Salvador remains unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return of its nationals."

TPS recipients positively contribute to our economy and are critical to the construction, home health care, food service, child care, and hospitality industries in my district. Ordering the

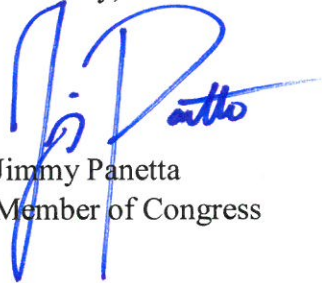
immediate removal of the nearly 262,500 Salvadorans with TPS living in the United States will cost employers over \$673 million in immediate turnover costs and ultimately cost the U.S. economy an estimated \$31 billion in Gross Domestic Product over the next 10 years.

TPS recipients from El Salvador are thoroughly vetted and must undergo a rigorous array of background and biometric checks every 18 months. They are our neighbors, friends, and coworkers. They open businesses, buy homes, attend our schools and contribute to our economy.

They are valuable members of the community on the central coast of California and their removal would send shockwaves throughout the region.

I urge you to consider these factors as you decide whether to extend the expiration date of TPS for El Salvador.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Panetta", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress