

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

July 11, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We write to request that you designate the “Northern Triangle” countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). These countries merit TPS designation because of the devastating increase in violence that has led to an acute humanitarian emergency. An effective and comprehensive response to this crisis must include TPS, which offers temporary protection in emergency situations, without granting a path to legal permanent resident status.

A new designation would expand TPS to Guatemala and provide a much-needed re-designation to the TPS designations for Honduras and El Salvador, both of which are based on natural disasters that occurred more than fifteen years ago. As a result, Hondurans who arrived in the United States after January 5, 1999 are ineligible for TPS, as are Salvadorans who arrived after March 9, 2001. All Guatemalans are ineligible for TPS.

Designating the Northern Triangle for TPS is both necessary and fully within the existing authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security. Section 244(b)(1)(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides clear statutory authority for the designation of TPS for citizens of a country that is afflicted by “extraordinary and temporary conditions in the foreign state that prevent aliens who are nationals of the state from returning to the state in safety, unless the [Secretary of Homeland Security] finds that permitting the aliens to remain temporarily in the United States is contrary to the national interest.” We believe the recent increase in violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras meets that standard.

There is no doubt that the Northern Triangle has become significantly more dangerous in recent years. The homicide rate in El Salvador nearly doubled between 2005 and 2015; in Honduras and Guatemala, the rate has increased by approximately fifty percent in that time span. Women are particularly vulnerable to violence; the rate of homicides against women in El Salvador is the highest in the world.

Sending children and families back to such a dangerous region places them directly in harm's way. Between February and May of 2016, the American Immigration Council conducted a series of interviews with women who had been recently deported. The women spoke of living in fear that the street gangs, who they had fled in the first place, would come and take their children. With corruption so prevalent in police forces, the women said they had nowhere to turn for protection. We cannot, in good conscience, send vulnerable children and families back to these conditions.

The Central American refugee crisis requires a comprehensive response. We need to strengthen due process protections domestically and work with partner governments to strengthen protection throughout the region. TPS can be an important element in such a strategy.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.


Sincerely,


NORMA J. TORRES
Member of Congress


RUBEN GALLEGO
Member of Congress



BETO O'ROURKE
Member of Congress


HAKEEM S. JEFFRIES
Member of Congress

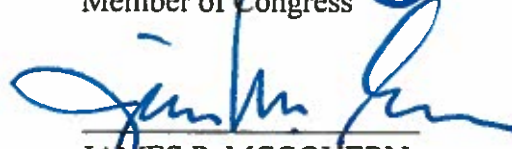

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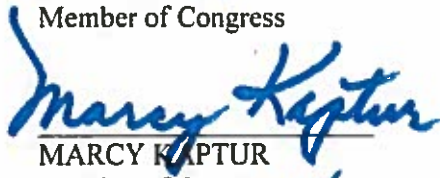
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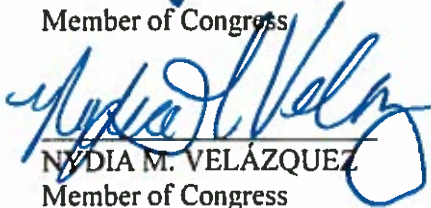
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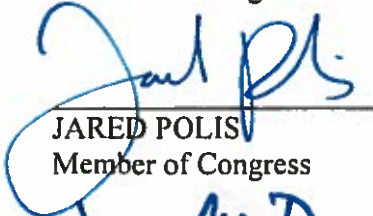
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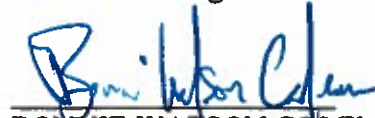
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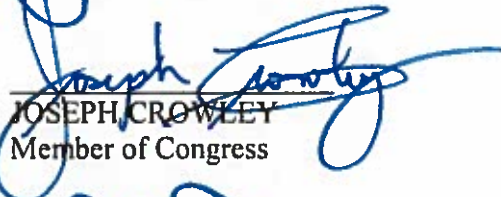
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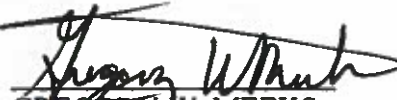
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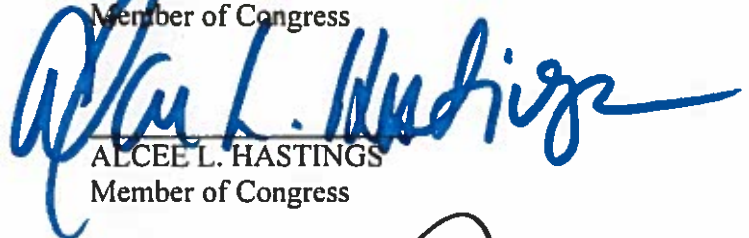
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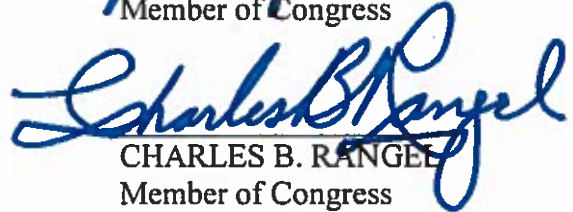
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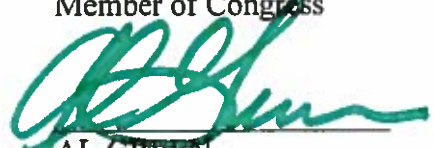
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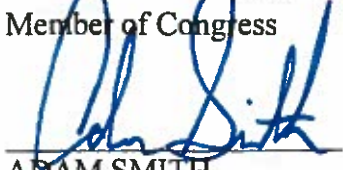
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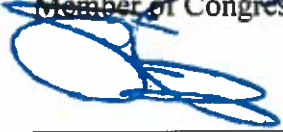
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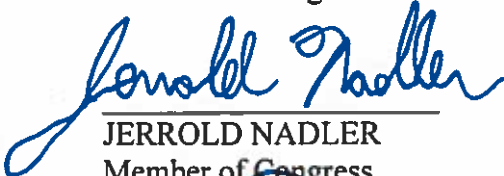
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Mike Thompson

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Member of Congress