

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 12, 2016

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Jeh C. Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretaries Kerry and Johnson:

We write to respectfully request that you grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to recently arrived, eligible Haitian nationals residing in the United States. In light of the recent havoc wrought on that country by Hurricane Matthew and the ongoing cholera epidemic, we do not believe it is safe or humane to deport non-criminals back to Haiti at this time.

After losing hundreds of thousands of its citizens to a devastating earthquake in 2010, and battling an unrelenting cholera epidemic that also began that year, Haiti is again facing high death tolls at the hands of Hurricane Matthew, which made landfall there on October 4. Reportedly, over 1,000 Haitians have died and potentially billions of dollars in damage has been wrought. It is simply imperative that we protect non-violent Haitian nationals from deportation to a country in the midst of such turmoil.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) was created for precisely this reason – to offer temporary, humane protection to foreign nationals living in the U.S. when extraordinary conditions make it impossible for them to return home. We believe the widespread damage and destruction in Haiti make these people eligible for TPS designation, and we urge you to swiftly consider it.

TPS has been granted to Haiti in the past, following the devastating earthquake in 2010. We believe this is again the safest route to avoid further burdening the Haitian government in this time of severe distress. Current law already provides strict eligibility criteria to protect our national security, such as excluding criminals from this designation. TPS is not a pathway to citizenship, nor is it a means for bringing over relatives. When the TPS designation of a country is terminated, those foreign nationals revert to the immigration status they held before the designation was granted.

In short, TPS is a temporary, humane, compassionate response that the U.S. can make in addition to all the other assistance we are providing in the region. We must assist the victims of this natural disaster and ongoing epidemic. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Schumer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chuck" and last name "Schumer" clearly visible.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten Gillibrand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kirsten" and last name "Gillibrand" clearly visible.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator