

News from Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

Representing New York's 7th Congressional District • Brooklyn, Manhattan & Queens
Ranking Member, House Small Business Committee



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CONTACT: Alex Haurek
(202) 225-2361

Velázquez Presses DHS to Designate TPS for Guatemala, Nicaragua

Washington, DC – Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY) has led 44 Members of Congress in [a letter](#) to federal immigration authorities arguing that immigrants fleeing violence and disaster in Guatemala and Nicaragua should receive Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Citing the displacement of residents due to the recent volcanic eruption in Guatemala and ongoing violence in Nicaragua, Velázquez is asking the Department of Homeland Security to exercise its powers and provide TPS for 18 months to eligible Guatemalans and for 12 months for eligible Nicaraguans.

“Since President Trump has been in office, he has heartlessly rescinded TPS for hundreds of thousands of recipients, putting their livelihoods in peril and fueling his Administration’s deportation machine,” said Velázquez. “Tragically, Trump’s DHS has consistently ignored the reality that residents of countries such as Guatemala and Nicaragua are suffering and deserve our help.”

In November of 2017, President Trump’s DHS announced [its decision to end TPS protections](#) for approximately 2,000 Nicaraguans living in the United States. In the letter, Velázquez illustrates that since that decision, Nicaragua has experienced significant political turmoil that has resulted in mass protests, compromising the safety and security of its people. Guatemala has [formally asked DHS for TPS](#) protections following the Volcan de Fuego eruption, but DHS has yet to respond to the request.

Velázquez’s letter has been endorsed by 21 immigrant-rights and legal organizations.

“CWS welcomes the leadership of the 44 Members of Congress in urging the administration to protect vulnerable Nicaraguan and Guatemalan families through Temporary Protected Status,” said The Rev. John L. McCullough, President & CEO of Church World Service. “Deporting families back into danger is immoral, and an affront to our nation’s long tradition of offering safe-haven to the vulnerable. We urge the administration recognize the legitimate peril facing Nicaraguan and Guatemalan families by designating these countries for TPS.”

Héctor Figueroa, President of 32BJ SEIU said: “Despite recent decisions by the White House to end Temporary Protected Status for the majority of people currently holding it, TPS remains a valuable humanitarian policy, which this administration should continue to use for countries under extraordinary stresses due to civil conflict, natural disasters or other extraordinary circumstances. The estimated 1.7 million lives affected by the eruption of the Fuego volcano in Guatemala, as well as the civil unrest in Nicaragua clearly fit under the criteria for granting TPS. This is why we support the members of Congress

in their call for the Administration to do the right thing and give TPS designation to these countries right now, and thank Rep. Nydia Velázquez for her steadfast leadership on this issue.”

“Today we ask the Administration to grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Guatemalans and Nicaraguans due to extenuating circumstances in each country. This is a wonderful humanitarian program that has saved the lives of so many. Guatemalans and Nicaraguans currently protected by TPS are law abiding and contributing members of our communities who live, work and pay taxes for the privilege to live legally and safely in the United States,” said Eskinder Negash, President/Chief Executive Officer for U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

Javier H. Valdés, Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York, said, “Current conditions in Guatemala and Nicaragua clearly warrant TPS designation. This should be a no-brainer for the administration, and we applaud Reps. Velazquez, Gutierrez, and their colleagues in the House for advancing this urgently-needed measure.”

"Volcán de Fuego turned Guatemalan towns into cemeteries and political violence has Nicaraguan communities trembling with fear. We call on Congress to remember our country's true values and designate Guatemala and Nicaragua for TPS. America can be great again by lending a hand to those in need," said Steven Choi, Executive Director for The New York Immigration Coalition.

"As a network of Latin American immigrant organizations in the United States, very familiar with the current reality in Guatemala and Nicaragua, we are fully supportive of a TPS designation for nationals of these two countries currently residing in the United States. The current situation of danger and uncertainty in both countries would be alleviated if their respective nationals in the US were to be protected from deportation. TPS protection was designed to be used in circumstances such as this one," said Oscar Chacón, Executive Director, Alianza Americas.

For a PDF of the letter, click [here](#).

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