

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 29, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Duke:

We write regarding the increasingly dire situation in Venezuela. As conditions there continue to deteriorate at the hands of Venezuela's dictator, Nicolás Maduro, we urge you to grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to all eligible Venezuelans currently in the United States.

Congress created TPS in 1990 in order to provide safe haven to individuals in the U.S. whose home countries are suffering from armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary conditions which prevent them from returning home safely, when doing so is not contrary to the national interest. The situation in Venezuela is dire and clearly meets this standard.

Maduro persists in his deliberate march toward imposing a corrupt, one-party dictatorship and the Venezuelan people continue to suffer from extreme shortages of food, medical supplies, and other staple products. Additionally, the Maduro regime routinely targets Venezuelans in the U.S. as 'traitors' and 'imperialists,' raising unique concerns for their safety if returned. It is no wonder that Venezuelans became the top U.S. asylum-seekers in 2016.

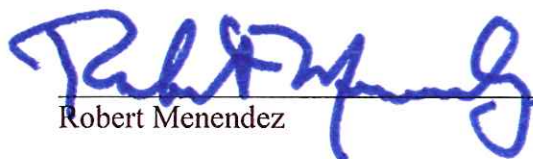
Granting TPS in these circumstances is also in line with our national interest. Venezuelans in the U.S. have not just become a vibrant part of our communities, but have also made important contributions including as lawyers, doctors, and small-business owners. Further, sending these individuals back could spur mass forced migration, destabilizing the region as neighboring Colombia implements its peace accord and as we seek to curb illicit narcotics flows to the United States.

We applaud this Administration's decisive action to confront the Maduro regime, but we must also address the humanitarian challenges posed by this crisis. We appreciate your consideration of this request and stand ready to work with you on this issue.

Sincerely,



Bill Nelson



Robert Menendez

Rich Durbin

Richard J. Durbin

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand

Aed Deutch

Theodore E. Deutch

Lois Frankel

Lois Frankel

Val B. Demings

Val Butler Demings

Eliot L. Engel

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Adriano Espaillet

Adriano Espaillet

Pramila Jayapal

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Frank Pallone, Jr.

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Jamie Raskin

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Catherine Cortez Masto

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Edward J. Markey

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Debbie Wasserman Schultz

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Kathy Castor

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Stephanie Murphy

Stephanie Murphy

Nanette Diaz Barragan

Nanette Barragan

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Ruben J. Kihuen

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Jared Polis

Jared Polis

Sherrod Brown

Sherrod Brown