

Lebanese Temporary Protected Status Act of 2006

On July 31, 2006, Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and John Sununu (R-NH) introduced the Lebanese Temporary Protected Status Act of 2006, which would make Lebanese nationals in the United States eligible for temporary protected status (TPS) for an initial twelve-month period.

What is Temporary Protected Status?

TPS can be granted to nationals of another country who are currently residing in the U.S. if returning to their country would pose a serious threat to their personal safety because of ongoing armed conflict, the temporary effects of an environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. TPS allows eligible nationals of designated countries to remain in the U.S. legally until TPS expires.

TPS can be granted for an initial period of six to 18 months. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) can extend TPS for a designated country beyond the initial period if it determines that the country still meets the conditions for designation.

TPS does not lead to permanent resident status or U.S. citizenship. When the TPS designation of a country is terminated, beneficiaries revert to the same immigration status they maintained before they were granted TPS.

An alien is not eligible for TPS if he has committed a felony or two or more misdemeanors or DHS determines that he poses a threat to national security. DHS may withdraw an alien's temporary protected status if it determines that the alien was in fact ineligible for TPS at the time it was granted to the alien. The decision to deny, withdraw or terminate TPS is in the sole discretion of the government; there is no judicial review of such a determination. DHS may use information it collects when an alien registers for TPS to institute removal proceedings against the alien upon the denial, withdrawal, or expiration of TPS.

Why should Temporary Protected Status be granted to Lebanon?

The attacks by the terrorist organization Hezbollah against the State of Israel have led to ongoing hostilities in Lebanon. If Lebanese nationals currently residing in the United States were forced to return to Lebanon, they would face a serious threat to their personal safety.

The conflict has damaged Lebanon's infrastructure and has disrupted the daily lives of millions of Lebanese, who face shortages of food, potable water, health care, and sanitation services. Hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed and approximately 20% of the population has reportedly been displaced.

Granting TPS to Lebanese nationals who are currently in the U.S. is consistent with our own national interest. Current conditions risk destabilizing the Lebanese government and undercutting its efforts to build a democratic and fully sovereign Lebanon. Granting TPS to Lebanon would assist the Lebanese government by delaying the return of thousands of people who might be unable to return to their homes and could themselves become refugees. It would also recognize the difficult personal circumstances of people stranded by war and send a positive message to the Arab world about U.S. concern for Lebanon.