

April 22, 2020

Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Kenneth T. Cuccinelli
Senior Official Performing Duties of the Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Extending TPS Re-Registration Period for Somalia and Yemen in Light of COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf and Senior Official Cuccinelli:

On behalf of the 69 undersigned national, state, and local organizations in the areas of immigration, health, civil rights, human rights, labor, faith, and education, we write to respectfully request that, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): **(a) automatically extend work authorization and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for all current Yemen and Somalia TPS holders; or (b) at the very least, extend the re-registration periods for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders from Somalia and Yemen for a total of 180 days.** While states across the country are rightfully taking precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, these measures and the subsequent loss of income and freedom of movement establish insurmountable barriers for TPS holders to renew their status before the rapidly approaching re-registration deadline. TPS holders should not have to choose between missing a deadline and violating health directives that keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe.

The re-registration periods for Yemeni and Somali TPS coincide closely with the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. During this time states and localities instructed 95 percent of our country, 316 million people, to shelter in place,¹ orders coinciding with unprecedented loss of jobs and investments nationwide. On March 18, 2020, USCIS closed its offices and instituted telework procedures for adjudicators, likely contributing to slower processing times moving forward. As service providers, we also face barriers to serving TPS holders, as employees must telework far from technology, case files, office supplies, and physical access to clients. These barriers make it increasingly likely that Somali and Yemeni TPS holders will be prevented or significantly delayed from re-registering on time and maintaining their work permits and protection from deportation. Finally, if TPS holders or their families members contract COVID-19 they may be physically unable to prepare their re-registration application in a timely manner.

¹ Sarah Mervosh et. al, *See Which States and Cities Have Told Residents to Stay at Home*, New York Times, April 7, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-stay-at-home-order.html>.

Thank you for considering this request. We respectfully request a response to this letter and you may contact Jill Marie Bussey at jbussey@cliniclegal.org (240) 353-5208 to share your response or with questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

National

African Communities Together

Alianza Americas

America's Voice

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

American Immigration Lawyers Association

Arab American Institute

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

Church World Service

Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

Families Belong Together

Franciscan Action Network

Freedom to Thrive

HIAS

Immigrant Legal Resource Center

International Refugee Assistance Project

Japanese American Citizens League

Muslim Advocates

Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC)

National Immigrant Justice Center

National Immigration Law Center

National Justice for Our Neighbors

National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights

National TPS Alliance

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Northeastern University School of Law

OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates

Oxfam America

Poder Latinx

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas--Justice Team

South Asian Americans Leading Together

The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Union for Reform Judaism

United We Dream

Win Without War

State and Local

Adhikaar
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)
Ascentria Care Alliance Immigration Legal Assistance Program
Boston University School of Law Immigrants' Rights & Human Trafficking Program
CAIR-Minnesota
Canopy NWA
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Boston
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington
Central American Resource Center
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Comité TPS Massachusetts
DeNovo
End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin
Haitin Bridge Alliance
Immigrant Hope - Brooklyn, NY
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
International Institute of New England
Justice For Our Neighbors Houston
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
New York Immigration Coalition
Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors
Political Asylum Immigration Representation (PAIR) Project
Rian Immigrant Center
Rosie's Place
San Antonio Region Justice For Our Neighbors
Univ of Mass School of Law Immigration Law Clinic
Yemeni American Merchant Association (YAMA)
Central American Resource Center (CARECEN-LA)