April 22, 2020

Chad F. Wolf                      Kenneth T. Cuccinelli
Acting Secretary                 Senior Official Performing Duties of the Director
245 Murray Lane, SW              20 Massachusetts Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20528             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.

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)