

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 19, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our strong support for the granting of Deferred Enforced Departure for Liberians legally living in the United States under Temporary Protected Status. The Temporary Protected Status designation is scheduled to expire on March 30, 2009.

As you know, Liberia entered a long period of violence, turmoil and civil war in 1989 and the United States granted all Liberians the chance to register for Temporary Protected Status. This allowed Liberian men, women and children to seek refuge from the violence and war crimes that were conducted by former President Charles Taylor. While the war is now over, Taylor left Liberia with a destroyed infrastructure and a devastated economy.

The leadership of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has put Liberia on a pathway of reform by rooting out corruption in the highest levels of government. However, Liberia's restoration remains a very difficult process. With unemployment reaching 80 percent and an infrastructure that is still badly damaged, Liberia is still in no place to welcome home refugees. Furthermore, the Liberian government believes that an influx of refugees could have a destabilizing effect on the country's fledgling economic and societal structures.

One of the unintended consequences of Temporary Protected Status is that the designation never accounted for a protracted conflict. Many Liberians have been living under TPS for at least 15 years and in that time have started families, bought homes and raised American-born children and planted roots in American society. Liberian-Americans have even answered the call to serve in the United States military.

America plays a crucial role in assisting Liberia's recovery. In addition to millions of dollars in foreign aid, Liberia also depends on remittances sent from family members in the United States. According to the government of Liberia, remittances from the United States to Liberia totaled \$60 million in 2007, providing an essential lifeline of support.

We are deeply concerned that if TPS for Liberians in the United States were terminated, Liberia's recovery could be damaged severely. In addition, thousands of families could be separated or uprooted due to a forced repatriation. Your Administration demonstrated

be separated or uprooted due to a forced repatriation. This is why we respectfully request your Administration to consider an extension of Temporary Protected Status or grant Deferred Enforced Departure.

Sincerely,

Patrick O. Kennedy

Keith Ellison

Sam Farr

Dwight Spoose

Betty McCollum

Raul M. Grijalva

Tim J. Walsh

Michael Espinoza

Yvette D. Clarke

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