

The Coalition for Permanent Residency: Mobilize for Liberia! Take Action Today!

The Need: Continued protection from deportation of Liberians in the U.S. after 20 years of lawful temporary status.

The Deadline: Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) ends September 30, 2011.

The Reason: When civil war erupted in Liberia in 1989, forcing hundreds of thousands of Liberians to flee, many looked to the United States for peace and safety. *Liberians left one of the bloodiest conflicts in recent history.* Horrific human rights abuses, including mass executions, torture, dismemberment, rape, looting, banditry, and the widespread use of child combatants, traumatized the Liberian population and left the country's infrastructure in ruin.

Since the end of the conflict, Liberia has achieved a fragile stability. Nearly the entire country lives in Monrovia, the capital, which has virtually no infrastructure—power, clean water, or habitable buildings. The average life expectancy remains under 42 years. Power struggles in the region continue to threaten peace and drive refugees into Liberia.

About half of Liberia's population was displaced during the Liberian conflict. As many as 270,000 Liberians now reside lawfully in the U.S. with large Liberian communities in California, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. Liberians residing in the U.S. have been a source of assistance to Liberia, sending money that helps stimulate Liberia's weak economy. This source of support would be severely diminished if Liberians are forced to leave the U.S.

Today about 3,000 Liberians continue to live in the limbo of “temporary” status in the United States. In metro areas with large Liberian communities, the *deportation of Liberians will harm certain sectors of the economy*, such as long-term healthcare, that employ large numbers of Liberians. In towns that are home to Liberians, entire neighborhoods will be affected by people leaving their homes and businesses behind. Also at issue is family separation. Liberians who sought protection in the U.S. painstakingly rebuilt their lives. They married and raised families here—including both U.S.-born and Liberian-born children. *Forcing their return will tear families apart.*

Stand in Solidarity: Diverse communities are standing in solidarity with Liberians. In Minnesota, the Coalition for Permanent Residency includes a diverse group of individuals and organizations working for the common goal of permanent resident status for communities on TPS. **Create a coalition for permanent residency in your community.**

Take Action: Call upon President Obama to immediately extend Deferred Enforced Departure by contacting the White House in writing (1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20500) or calling 202-456-1111. Call your Congressional Representative and Senators to urge their support of Liberians. Ask them to support legislation for permanent resident status for Liberians (H.R. 1293/S. 656). Contact the Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121) and ask to be connected to your senators and representative.

The Basics: Contacting Your Elected Representatives

- Everyone in the U.S. is represented in Congress by two senators and one Member of the House of Representatives. To find the name of your senators and representative, go to <http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>
- To find your elected officials' phone numbers call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202)224-3121 and ask for your senators' and/or representative's office. The Switchboard will connect your call.

Tips on Writing Your Elected Representatives

- Address written correspondence to your senator:

The Honorable [Full Name]
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator [Last Name]

- Address written correspondence to your representative:

The Honorable [Full Name]
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. [Last Name]

- Be sure to sign your letter. Clearly print your name, address, and phone number so it is clear you are a constituent.

Tips on Telephoning Your Elected Representatives

- Remember that telephone calls are usually taken by a staff member, not the member of Congress. Ask to speak with the person who handles immigration issues.
- After identifying yourself, tell the person you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act, S.656/H.R.1293, and the immediate extension of Deferred Enforced Departure. I urge Senator/Representative (Name) to support this legislation and the continued protection of Liberians."
- Give reasons for your support of the bill. Ask for your senators' or representative's position on the bill. You may also request a written response to your telephone call.