

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 9, 2009

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our concern about the humanitarian crisis in Haiti and for the Haitian population in the United States. Due to the recent hardships suffered by Haiti, we urge you to grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitian nationals currently residing within our borders.

As you know, four major hurricanes or tropical storms ravaged Haiti in 2008. Upwards of 800 people died and over 3 million people were affected. Damages have been estimated at about \$1 billion, which is approximately 15% of Haiti's GDP. This includes the loss of one-third of the country's rice crop. Haiti's rice is primarily used for domestic consumption and the loss of the crop only exacerbates a previously existing food crisis. Reports indicate that food shortages could lead to riots and increased incidences of children dying of malnutrition. Deporting Haitians back to their country at this time would inhibit the Haitian government's ability to recover from the storms and aggravate a challenging humanitarian situation.

TPS is generally granted to nationals of a country who are temporarily unable to return safely to their country because of armed conflict or an environmental disaster, such as the multiple hurricanes that devastated Haiti last year. The United States granted TPS to Honduras and Nicaragua in 1999, following Hurricane Mitch, and to El Salvador in 2001, following several earthquakes.

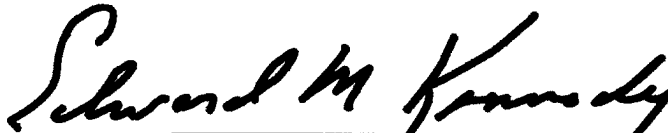
Critics of the TPS program have argued that a TPS designation will encourage nationals of the designated country to migrate to our country. However, TPS would only be available to Haitians already in the United States and there is little evidence to support the claim that such a designation would result in increased migration.

Haiti clearly meets the criteria for TPS designation and extending TPS to Haitian nationals is the fairest course of action. We respectfully request that you grant TPS to Haitian nationals currently residing in the United States.

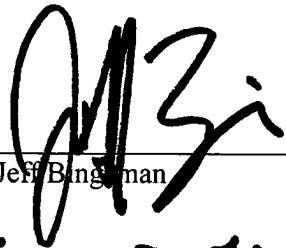
Sincerely,



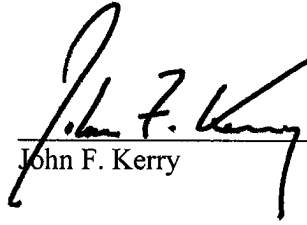
Richard J. Durbin



Edward M. Kennedy



Jeff Bingaman



John F. Kerry



Kirsten Gillibrand