



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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By ESEC at 5:07 pm, Jul 08, 2022

July 8, 2022

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Mayorkas:

Thank you for your efforts to designate Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) on March 8, 2021. This decision has positively impacted the lives of over 200,000 Venezuelans who were able to apply for TPS in FY2021. With this designation set to expire in September 2022, and the deadline to redesignate occurring 60 days before the expiration, we urge your full and fair consideration of redesignating Venezuela for TPS and moving the required arrival date forward to December 31, 2021.

Political instability caused by Maduro's authoritarian regime has led to massive food and medicine shortages, 94% of the population living in poverty, 60% of the population is suffering from food insecurity and the country's economy is crippled. Venezuela's economy has contracted by more than 74% since 2014 which is more than twice the magnitude of the Great Depression in the United States. Venezuela has also experienced some of the highest homicide and crime victimization rates in Latin America and the Caribbean. Additionally, food and medicine shortages have led to increased infant and maternal mortality rates, and the return of previous eradicated diseases such as diphtheria and measles. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated this humanitarian crisis and has led to thousands of deaths.

Due to the ongoing crisis in Venezuela, Venezuelans have consistently been the leading nationality requesting asylum in the United States since 2016. As of November 2021, U.N. agencies believe that over 6 million Venezuelans have fled the country. The number of displaced individuals from Venezuela only continues to grow.

Given the grave conditions in Venezuela, and within all applicable rules and regulations, we strongly urge your full and fair consideration of an extension and redesignation of Venezuela for TPS. We also ask that you move the required arrival date forward to December 31, 2021 to continue to provide safety and support to Venezuelans fleeing the political, economic and humanitarian crisis currently plaguing their home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



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Kathy Castor

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

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Charlie Crist
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Nanette Diaz Barragan
Member of Congress



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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

September 20, 2022

The Honorable Darren Soto
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Soto:

Thank you for your July 8, 2022 letter to the Department of Homeland Security in support of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Venezuela. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is principally responsible for advising the Secretary on TPS issues and implementing the program, and Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond on his behalf.

I appreciate the concerns you have outlined regarding the situation in Venezuela and your interest in its redesignation for TPS. As you know, on July 11, 2022, after careful consideration, including a thorough review of the country conditions and consultation with interagency partners, Secretary Mayorkas extended the designation of TPS for Venezuela for 18 months.¹

This extension will be in effect from September 10, 2022, through March 10, 2024 and allows the approximately 343,000 Venezuelans who were in the United States at the time of the initial designation in March of 2021 to continue to be eligible for TPS and remain in the United States under protected status.² The *Federal Register* notice provides for the automatic extension of employment authorization documents that expire on September 9, 2022 and includes information about fees and how applicants may request a fee waiver, if necessary.

USCIS will continue to process pending TPS applications. Applicants with a pending Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status, or Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, will not need to file either application again. If USCIS approves a pending Form I-821 that was filed during the initial designation of TPS for Venezuela, USCIS will grant the applicant TPS through March 10, 2024. Similarly, if USCIS approves a pending TPS-related Form I-765 for an initial applicant, USCIS will issue a new Employment Authorization Document (EAD) valid through March 10, 2024. USCIS will also plan and coordinate outreach opportunities regarding the extension of TPS for Venezuela to provide information and answer questions from the public.

¹ <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2022/07/11/dhs-announces-extension-temporary-protected-status-venezuela>

² See Extension of the Designation of Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status (87 FR 55024), available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/09/08/2022-19527/extension-of-the-designation-of-venezuela-for-temporary-protected-status>.

USCIS is committed to the timely and efficient processing of all applications. Reducing backlogs and timely processing of cases is the highest priority of the agency. Recently, USCIS set agency-wide backlog reduction goals, expanded premium processing to additional form types, and continues working to improve timely access to EADs. The recent Temporary Final Rule to increase the automatic EAD extension from up to 180 days to up to 540 days for certain renewal applicants, to include TPS applicants and beneficiaries with an approved EAD, not only allows applicants to avoid gaps in employment and maintain continuity of operations for U.S. employers, it affords USCIS the time it needs to address staffing shortages and implement additional efficiencies. The recent successful launch of online filing for all TPS designated countries is also notable, as it ensures an easier application process and faster receipt of all TPS applications for processing. We will continue to identify opportunities to support our efforts to timely process applications for TPS and related documents.

This extension is one of many ways the Biden administration, together with our regional partners, is providing humanitarian support to Venezuelans at home and abroad, including providing additional humanitarian and development funding, encouraging regional partners to offer protective status, and creating a path to a regular migration status for Venezuelans. In addition, USCIS also offers support that may be available upon request to assist eligible Venezuelan nationals who have been affected by special situations, including the following:

- Change or extension of nonimmigrant status if eligible Venezuelan nationals are currently in the United States, even if the request is filed after the authorized period of admission has expired;
- Expedited processing of requests for advance parole documents;
- Expedited adjudication of requests for off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students experiencing severe economic hardship;
- Expedited adjudication of employment authorization applications, where appropriate;
- Assistance if applicants received a Request for Evidence or a Notice of Intent to Deny and were unable to appear for an interview, submit evidence, or respond in a timely manner because of the special situation; and,
- Replacement of lost or damaged immigration or travel documents issued by USCIS, such as a Permanent Resident Card (Green Card).

More information on these options is available on our website at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations>.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director