

FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



May 24, 2017

Governor Rick Scott
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: *Gratitude for your intervention on behalf of Haitian TPS*

Dear Governor Scott:

Thank you so much for encouraging the Department of Homeland Security of the Trump Administration to extend Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Haiti. We are thankful that Secretary Kelly granted the TPS extension this week.

We are, however, concerned that the extension was for six months, not the customary 18 months. As you know, this temporary immigration status was designated to Haitian nationals after the earthquake in 2010 when the country's conditions prevented safe return. While this may seem like sufficient time to stabilize a country after an earthquake, it is not enough time for significant recovery, particularly for the poorest country in the Western hemisphere that has been continually plagued by hurricanes, droughts, and cholera outbreaks since 2010.

As a result of temporary U.S. work permits, the 58,000 Haitians who are recipients of TPS contribute to our communities and assist in facilitating economic recovery and development in Haiti by sending money to their families. Returning these individuals to a country in six months that remains vulnerable to future disasters and where millions continue to be in need of aid is not a sufficiently humanitarian response.

We hope that you and President Trump will support a remedy that would allow this population an option to remain permanently in the United States. After seven or more years, they have deep roots in our community, including many American-born children. The large Haitian community, with so many naturalized citizens and with whom I spent so much of my priesthood, remains a significant segment of Florida's population.

Again, thank you, Governor. Your assistance in this effort will be most helpful as we move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "Thomas G. Wenski".

Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, D.D.
President & Archbishop of Miami

cc: Catholic Bishops of Florida