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“Ending TPS status for immigrant students is unacceptable”, according to academic leaders on Latin America

- LASA calls on the U.S. government to offer a path to citizenship for Central Americans and Haitians with Temporary Protected Status

Prominent scholars on Latin America agree that ending the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and the consequences that follow for immigrant students and their families are unacceptable. Additionally, the academics point out that forcing people to return to El Salvador and Honduras sends them back to countries from which hundreds continue to flee on a daily basis.

The continuing attempts by Central Americans from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to escape economic inequality, youth gangs, drug cartels and their government’s ineffective and abusive approaches to combatting crime indicate that the conditions in these countries have not improved. They are the root causes of the wave of women and children who fled through Mexico into the United States from 2014 to the present.

For this reason, the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) calls on the U.S. government to restore TPS status to Central Americans, Haitians, and others who have lost it. “It is time to offer a path to citizenship for TPS recipients.”

Scholarly opinion regarding the need to maintain TPS status for these groups coincides with public opinion that disapproves of the actions of the President against immigrants. Polls have consistently shown that U.S. citizens believe that long-term undocumented residents with significant ties to the U.S. (such as having children who are citizens) should enjoy the opportunity to become citizens themselves.

TPS figures

Forcing TPS recipients to leave the United States will divide families, cause suffering and hardship and have a major impact on the U.S. economy in many regions due to the large number of families affected. The following approximate figures suggest that the actions of the Trump Administration represent an attack on family unity and demographic and economic diversity in the United States.

- **325,000** migrants from 13 TPS-designated countries reside in the U.S.
- **273,000** children born in the U.S. have TPS beneficiary parents
- **190,000** U.S. citizen children, have Salvadoran TPS recipient parents living in the U.S.
- **200,000** Salvadorans, **46,000** Haitians, and **2,550** Nicaraguans recently lost their TPS status
- **57,000** Hondurans are waiting for news on their TPS status
- **81% - 88%** of TPS recipients from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti are active participants in the U.S. labor force

Historical Setback

Fundamentally shifting the frame on immigration, the Trump administration seems determined to undo the 1965 and 1986 immigration laws that removed overtly racist components of immigration laws that had shaped U.S. policy since the 1920s and have reshaped U.S. racial geography in the past 50 years.

As a result of reforms of immigration law in the second half of the twentieth century approximately half of those migrants who arrived since 1965 are from Latin America and a quarter from Asia. No one racial or ethnic group will constitute a majority and Latinos will constitute 24 percent of the overall population by 2065; Asians will be 14% of the total by that same date. Earlier immigration waves from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century were almost entirely made up of people from Europe.

The backlash to this ongoing dramatic demographic shift has gone from the political margins to the political center and is becoming normalized, with the U.S. President maligning immigrants from countries with Afro-descendent and indigenous populations.

About LASA

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the largest professional Association in the world for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America. With over 12,000 members, nearly 60% of whom reside outside the United States, LASA brings together experts on Latin America from across the globe and from all disciplines and diverse occupational endeavors.

If you wish to interview a LASA Executive Council member, you can contact the LASA communications office at (412) 648-7929 or lasa@pitt.edu.