

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

The Episcopal Church Statement to the House Judiciary Committee, pertaining to its hearing *Protecting Dreamers and TPS Recipients*

March 6, 2019

The Episcopal Church, the U.S. based province of the Anglican Communion, the third largest Christian denomination globally, has long welcomed refugees and immigrants as a fundamental part of its mission. It wishes to express its unequivocal support for legislation to protect both Dreamers and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients. Dreamers and TPS recipients are crucial to the economic vitality of United States and are integral to the faith community of The Episcopal Church.

The Episcopal Church, through its official Church policies, has long supported the passage of legislation that would offer a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth and young adults. In a statement on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, and President of the House of Deputies Rev. Gay Clark Jennings articulate the Church's moral stance on Dreamers: "those young women and men who were brought to this country as children, who were raised here and whose primary cultural and country identity is American [...] are children of God and deserve a chance to live full lives, free from fear of deportation to countries that they may have never known and whose languages they may not speak." Offering Dreamers a pathway to citizenship is a critical step to giving these children and their families stability and ensuring the success of future generations of dedicated and hardworking citizens.

As with Dreamers, The Episcopal Church's unwavering support for those with and in need of TPS is reflected and affirmed in official Church policies. If TPS were terminated, nearly 300,000 individuals who are currently protected under this program would lose their legal right to remain in the U.S. causing the communities and economies they contribute to daily to suffer. Further, these individuals need ongoing protection as many countries remain unsafe due to ongoing conflict, recovering from natural disaster or being unable to safely reintegrate those who currently have TPS. For example, Haiti, the largest diocese of The Episcopal Church, has been unable to fully recover from the earthquake in 2010 and is therefore not able to reintegrate the nearly 50,000 Haitian TPS holders in the U.S. if their status were to be terminated. The Episcopal Church also urges protections for those with Deferred Enforced Departure (DED). This is why The Episcopal Church urges Congress to support legislation that offers a pathway to legal status and long term stability for current DED recipients and TPS holders.

The Episcopal Church's ministry and mission not only recognizes the need to welcome all of God's people, but also to strive for justice and peace for them as well. Thus, as witnesses of God's love and in the interest of protecting the most vulnerable among us, The Episcopal Church urges Congress to pass legislation that will provide long overdue solutions for Dreamers and DED and TPS recipients in our country as a first step towards comprehensive immigration reform.