

DHS Extends Temporary Protected Status to Haitians

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Washington D.C. - Today, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) took an important step on behalf of Haitians affected by last year's devastating earthquake, demonstrating the humanitarian side of its immigration responsibilities. Secretary Janet Napolitano [announced](#) [1] that DHS would extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for an additional eighteen months for Haitians currently residing in the United States. She also announced that she would permit Haitians who arrived up to one year after the earthquake, many of whom came in on visitor visas and other authorized measures, to apply for TPS. The following is a statement from Mary Giovagnoli, Director of the Immigration Policy Center.

"We applaud DHS's decision both to extend the timing of TPS and to broaden the scope of people who qualify for it. In the chaotic days following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the men and women of DHS worked hard to provide relief to survivors, admitting many people temporarily to save them from devastation, disease, and starvation. While DHS quickly designated TPS status for those Haitians residing in the U.S. at the time of the earthquake, many others who came to the U.S. within days or weeks of the disaster were ineligible for TPS, but were also unable to return home. Today's announcement addresses these problems and recognizes the extraordinary need for a compassionate and humane response to the devastation in Haiti.

Today's decision by the Secretary is evidence of the power of the Executive branch to shape the implementation of existing immigration law. Secretary Napolitano could have declined to extend TPS or make more people eligible, because the law did not require her to do so. But because she had the discretion to revisit the original determination, and ultimately used it to expand the range of people eligible for this protection, the U.S. will be able to help thousands of people who might otherwise have faced deportation to Haiti and enormous suffering. However, DHS will continue to deport some Haitians back to Haiti. We urge DHS to continue to exercise discretion with respect to Haitians still facing deportation and others adversely affected by harsh immigration policies who are eligible for immigration relief."

For more information on DHS' response to the Haitian Earthquake see:

- [Second Annual DHS Progress Report](#) [2] (April 2011)

For more information on Executive Action see:

- [Executive Action: A Resource Page](#) [3]

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