



## IMMIGRATION

# TPS Holders Are Integral Members of the U.S. Economy and Society

By Nicole Prchal Svajlenka, Angie Bautista-Chavez, and Laura Muñoz Lopez | Posted on October 20, 2017, 9:01 am



AP/Wilfredo Lee

Postcards addressed to President Donald Trump asking him to extend Temporary Protected Status for tens of thousands of Central Americans and Haitians are shown during a news conference in Miami, Florida, June 7, 2017.

**See also:** [“Temporary Protected Status: State-by-State Fact Sheets”](#)

Currently, more than 300,000 people from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti live in the United States with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a temporary legal status granted to individuals from designated countries facing ongoing armed conflict, disaster, or other exigent circumstances. These TPS beneficiaries are integral to the American economy and American society: They have lived in the United States for an average of 19 years and are employed at high rates, ranging from 69.2 to 83.5 percent. The contributions made by TPS holders, moreover, will only continue to grow in the future, as they are collectively raising families that include nearly 275,000 U.S.-born children.

If the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) allows their protections to expire—as it appears poised to do in the coming months—TPS holders will face the difficult choice of either returning to countries that still face many of the same extraordinary conditions that led to the initial grant of TPS or remaining in the United States without lawful immigration status. Those who return to their home countries would be placing their lives and the lives of their family members in jeopardy. But staying in the United States without protected status would mean being unable to work legally and living under constant threat of deportation and family separation. This charticle provides an overview of the demographics and contributions of the three largest groups with TPS.

## Temporary Protected Status in the United States

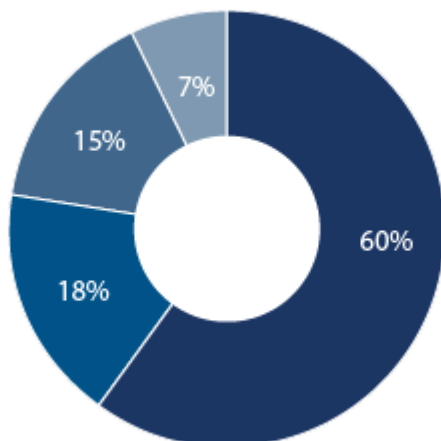
The secretary of homeland security, in consultation with the U.S. secretary of state, has the [discretion to grant TPS](#) to individuals from countries where armed conflict, environmental disasters, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions make it impossible to return without jeopardizing their lives. Estimates show that [more than 320,000 people](#) in the United States hold TPS from 10 designated countries: El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.\* By statute, TPS is granted for set periods of time, ranging from six to 18 months. Because decisions about whether to continue TPS must be made [no later than 60 days prior](#) to the expiration of the current TPS grant, such decisions must be made for El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti by January 8, 2018, November 6, 2017, and November 23, 2017, respectively.

FIGURE 1

## Estimated number of Temporary Protected Status holders from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti, 2015

Country of origin

- El Salvador
- Honduras
- Haiti
- Other



Source: Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin, "A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti," *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 5 (3) (2017): 577–592, available at <http://jmhs.cmsny.org/index.php/jmhs/article/view/99>.



In order to receive TPS, [applicants must prove](#) that they have lived continuously in the United States since a date specified in the Federal Register designation and must undergo a criminal and security background check to confirm that they have not been convicted of [any felony or two or more misdemeanors](#) and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security. TPS holders must reapply and undergo background checks every six to 18 months when the designation is renewed, paying substantial fees each time.

Individuals who are granted TPS receive a work permit and time-limited protection from deportation. While TPS enables recipients to [contribute to and integrate into](#) the United States' economic, social, and civic spheres, it [falls short](#) of providing recipients with a pathway to permanent legal status in the country.

## TPS holders are integral members of communities across the United States

[More than 90 percent](#) of TPS holders in the United States are from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. An [estimated](#) 195,000 Salvadorans currently hold TPS, along with an estimated 57,000 Hondurans and 50,000 Haitians.

While Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian TPS holders live in communities across the United States, they are mostly concentrated in six states. A [total](#) of 55,000 Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian TPS

holders live in California; 44,800 live in Texas; 44,800 live in Florida; 26,000 live in New York; 23,500 live in Virginia; and 22,500 live in Maryland.

FIGURE 2

## Estimated employment rates of Temporary Protected Status holders, 2015

- TPS holders from El Salvador
- TPS holders from Honduras
- TPS holders from Haiti



Source: Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin, "A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti," *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 5 (3) (2017): 577–592, available at <http://jmhs.cmsny.org/index.php/jmhs/article/view/99>.



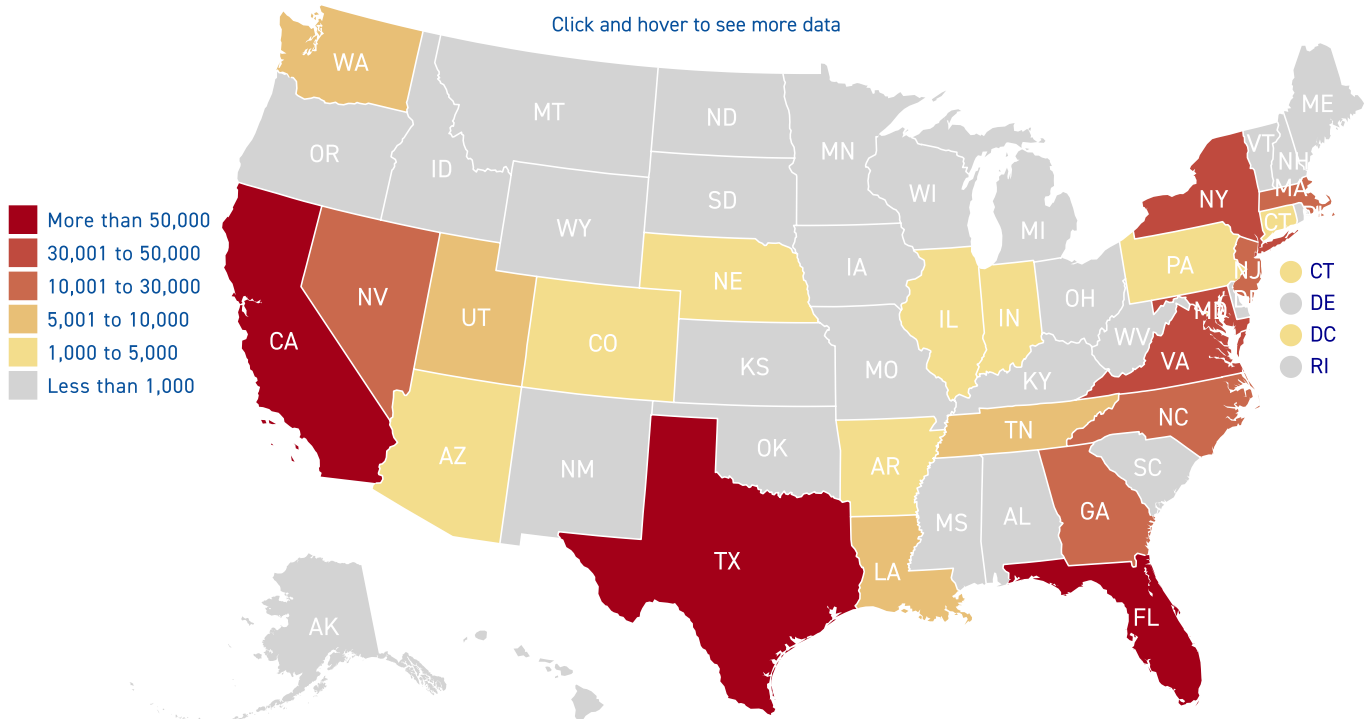
**Metropolitan area trends** reflect this spread; the largest concentrations of Salvadoran TPS holders live in the Washington, Los Angeles, and New York metro areas. The largest concentrations of Honduran TPS holders live in the New York, Miami, and Houston metro areas. The largest concentrations of Haitian TPS holders live in the Miami, New York, and Boston metro areas.

TPS holders are long-term, integrated members of communities across the United States. On average, recipients from Honduras **have lived** in the United States for 22 years, recipients from El Salvador an average of 21 years, and recipients from Haiti an average of 13 years. Nearly one-third of households with Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian TPS holders **have mortgages**. This measure is indicative of TPS holders' active pursuit of homeownership, which brings along with it important contributions to their local economies in the form of sales and property taxes. Ending TPS, and thereby removing the ability of recipients to work legally, would likely increase the risk of foreclosure for families with TPS members. And given the spatial concentration of TPS holders, eliminating TPS could have negative economic reverberations for entire communities.

TPS holders' roots extend beyond themselves to their families. Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian TPS holders have a total of 273,200 **U.S.-born citizen children**. If TPS is eliminated, these U.S.-citizen children would also face serious risks: They would either face separation from their parents or be

forced to relocate to a country foreign to them. Even the fear of family separation or deportation of parents has been found to have [detrimental effects](#) on children's [cognitive and psychological](#) well-being.

### Estimated number of TPS holders from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti and their U.S.-born children



Note: Data is only presented for states with an estimated 1,000 or more TPS holders.

Source: Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin, "A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti," *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 5 (3) (2017): 577-592, available at <http://jmhs.cmsny.org/index.php/jmhs/article/view/99>.

Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian TPS holders also hold strong ties to their communities. A [recent survey](#) of Salvadoran and Honduran TPS holders demonstrates that they are active community members, with 29.7 percent of respondents reporting participation in a variety of organizations, including neighborhood and work associations, schools, and sports teams. These figures are similar to [estimates](#) of the civic participation rates for the U.S. population.

## Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian TPS holders make valuable economic contributions to their communities

TPS holders gain important economic benefits from their status and, as such, are able to better contribute to their communities and to the nation as a whole. According to a [2017 survey](#) conducted with TPS holders from El Salvador and Honduras, more than half of those responding reported securing new and better jobs after receiving TPS—56.7 percent and 54 percent, respectively. Furthermore, 47.3 percent of those surveyed reported earning higher wages after securing TPS.

TPS holders from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti are [employed](#) at high rates. And while TPS holders from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti work in a variety of sectors, they are key contributors to the following [industries](#): construction, restaurant and other food services, landscaping services, child care, and grocery stores.

TABLE 1

### Temporary Protected Status designation, expiration, and decision dates for El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti

	Most recent designation date	Expiration date	Decision to renew
El Salvador	March 9, 2001	March 9, 2018	January 8, 2018
Honduras	January 5, 1999	January 5, 2018	November 6, 2017
Haiti	July 23, 2011	January 22, 2018	November 23, 2017

Sources: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "INA: Act 244 - Temporary Protected Status," available at <https://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/SLB/HTML/SLB/0-0-0-1/0-0-0-29/0-0-0-7238.html> (last accessed August 2017); U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Temporary Protected Status," available at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status> (last accessed August 2017).



Several estimates point to potential negative economic effects facing TPS holders and the United States as a whole should the program be eliminated. CAP analysis shows that if Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian workers with TPS were removed from the labor force, the United States would lose \$164 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) over the next decade. Furthermore, if TPS holders lost their work authorization, it would result in a \$6.9 billion [reduction](#) to Social Security and Medicare contributions over a decade, as calculated by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. Finally, if TPS holders could no longer work in their current jobs, employers would experience \$967 million in [turnover costs](#).

TPS holders contribute to their families and communities, both in the United States and abroad. With access to better jobs and higher wages, TPS recipients frequently [send money](#) to struggling family members in their home countries. These remittances play a key role in helping support countries recovering from devastating environmental disasters that have taken lives and destroyed infrastructure, housing, and access to adequate nutrition. A [recent survey](#) found that 77 percent of

Salvadoran and Honduran TPS holders send remittances amounting to 9 percent of their monthly wages back to their home countries.

Remittances from workers in the United States are essential to facilitating the recovery and bolstering the economies of countries designated for TPS—particularly at a time when U.S. foreign aid to these countries is on the decline. The Trump administration’s 2018 [proposed budget request](#) to Congress, for example, proposes to reduce foreign aid to Latin America and the Caribbean to levels not seen since 2001. In 2015, [remittances](#) from the United States to El Salvador totaled \$4 billion, to Honduras \$3.3 billion, and to Haiti \$1.3 billion. Using GDP [estimates](#) from the World Bank, CAP calculates that in 2015, remittances made up more than 15 percent of GDP for El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. Should the flow of remittances from the United States to these countries disappear, the situation on the ground there would surely worsen.

TABLE 2

### U.S. remittances as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) by country, 2015

Estimates for country GDP from the World Bank and estimates for U.S. remittances from Pew Research Center

	U.S. remittances, 2015	U.S. remittances as a share of GDP by country, 2015
El Salvador	\$4 billion	15%
Honduras	\$3.3 billion	16%
Haiti	\$1.3 billion	15%

Sources: U.S. remittances, 2015: Pew Research Center, “Remittance Flows Worldwide in 2015,” available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/interactives/remittance-map/> (last accessed August 2017). U.S. remittances as a share of GDP by country, 2015: The World Bank, “World Bank Open Data: El Salvador,” available at <https://data.worldbank.org/country/el-salvador> (last accessed August 2017); The World Bank, “World Bank Open Data: Haiti,” available at <https://data.worldbank.org/country/haiti> (last accessed August 2017); The World Bank, “World Bank Open Data: Honduras,” available at <https://data.worldbank.org/country/honduras> (last accessed August 2017).



## The Trump administration should continue TPS

Through access to work permits and relief from deportation, Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian TPS holders have made substantial contributions to the economic, social, and civic fabric of the United States. Should the Department of Homeland Security allow TPS designations to expire, it would force TPS holders and their loved ones to make a nearly impossible choice. Whether TPS holders decided to return to their struggling home countries or stay in the United States and risk deportation, the harms of ending TPS would be borne not only by the more than 320,000 TPS recipients but by a nearly equal number of U.S.-born children, their extended families, their employers, and the millions of people in and around their communities whose lives they touch. The data show that TPS holders are essential contributors to the U.S. economy and society, and provide critical financial support to

assist recovery and stability in their home countries—both things the Trump administration should consider as it decides the future of TPS.

## Methodology

This piece and the accompanying materials rely heavily on four analyses of TPS, conducted by the [Center for Migration Studies of New York](#), the [Immigrant Legal Resource Center \(ILRC\)](#), [Cecilia Menjivar](#) from the Center for Migration Research at the University of Kansas, and analysis of 2011-2015 5-year American Community Survey data, provided by Professor Tom K. Wong, of the University of California, San Diego.

CAP's unique contribution is the GDP losses associated with ending TPS. A [2016 CAP report](#) authored by Ryan Edwards and Francesc Ortega estimated the national and state-by-state GDP loss that would result from removing unauthorized workers from the workforce, both annually and over the next decade. This charticle uses those estimates of GDP loss and the number of unauthorized workers to identify the contributions of each unauthorized worker to the GDP. By both assuming that the skill distribution of the workforce with TPS reflects that of the broader unauthorized workforce and expressing data in 2013 dollars, this analysis reflects a conservative estimate. The GDP losses associated with ending TPS are derived by multiplying the number of employed TPS recipients with the losses associated with each unauthorized worker.

This estimate of GDP loss is larger than the estimated GDP loss presented in the ILRC research because it measures different economic components. ILRC's estimate is based on lost earnings for TPS holders, while CAP's estimate is modelled from both lost earnings and industry outputs.

State level data on TPS holders from El Savador, Honduras, and Haiti is available [here](#).

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*\*Authors' note: On September 18, 2017, the Trump administration announced that it will terminate TPS for Sudanese nationals effective November 2, 2018.*



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