

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 2, 2016

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Johnson and Secretary Kerry,

The earthquake that hit Ecuador has left hundreds dead and thousands homeless, and our thoughts and concerns are with the people of Ecuador at this time. Given the magnitude of the recovery efforts underway, we urge you to extend Temporary Protected Status to Ecuadorians in the U.S. so that they are not expected to return home in the midst of such devastation.

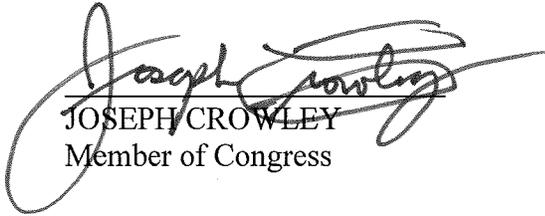
Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is designed to grant protection to foreign nationals living in the U.S. when extraordinary circumstances make it difficult for them to return to their homeland. Specifically, the statute says that TPS may be granted when there are “extraordinary and temporary conditions in the foreign state that prevent...nationals of the state from returning to the state in safety.” Ecuador has experienced continued aftershocks, adding to the uncertainty and fear in the region, and the focus should be on safety and immediate needs like housing the displaced. TPS would bring significant relief to people in Ecuador, as well as the Ecuadorian community in the United States, by assuring them that the focus can remain on these most pressing concerns.

According to media reports, thousands of people were left homeless by the earthquake, and up to 40,000 will be in need of temporary shelter and other immediate aid. Challenges in obtaining water and food, coupled with the difficulty of travel within the region, demonstrate that living conditions are far from ideal. It is clear that it would not be safe or humane to expect Ecuadorian nationals currently in the U.S. to return to their homeland at this time.

TPS has often been granted in similar circumstances after severe natural disasters abroad. Allowing Ecuadorian nationals that are here in the U.S. to remain here temporarily is the safe, reasonable, and compassionate thing to do, and we hope you will act swiftly to provide this reassurance to the Ecuadorian people in a time of great distress.

We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and appreciate your prompt consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



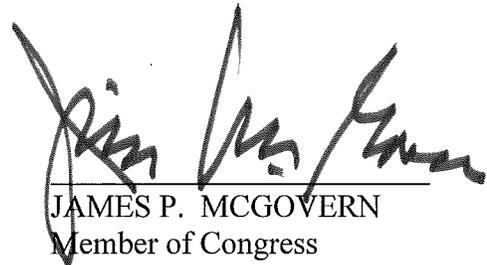
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Member of Congress



ALAN GRAYSON
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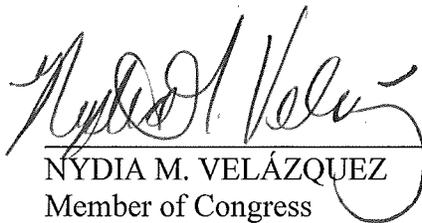
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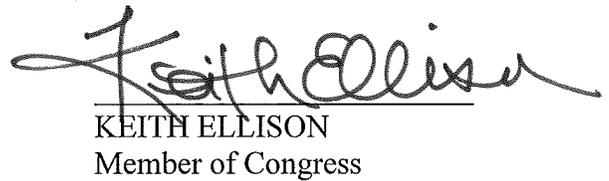
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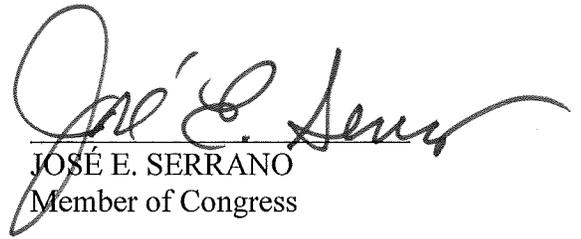
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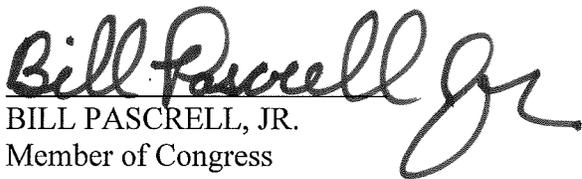
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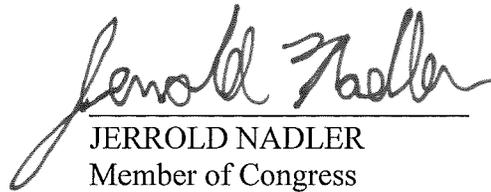
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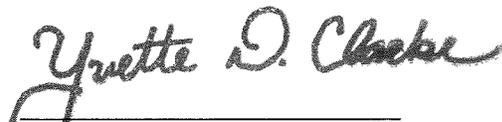
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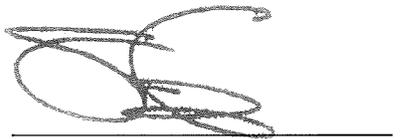
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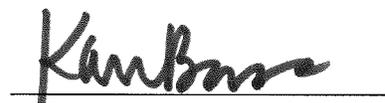

NITA M. LOWEY
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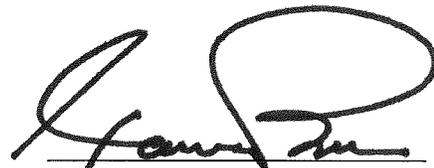

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