



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 31, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Noem and Secretary Rubio,

We write to denounce and express our strong opposition to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's misguided decision to vacate the January 17, 2025 notice that extended the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Venezuela, reverting to the TPS redesignation and extension guidance that was announced in October 2023. With the 2023 redesignation set to expire on April 2, 2025, and the 2021 extension set to expire on September 10, 2025, this will have a horrific impact on more than 505,400 Venezuelans who currently hold protected status. This decision will also devastate the communities where they live, work, and pay taxes.

Political instability, endemic corruption, and repression under Maduro's authoritarian regime has led to massive food and medicine shortages, with millions living in poverty and suffering from food insecurity. Venezuela's economy has contracted by more than 80% since 2014 which is more than twice the magnitude of the Great Depression in the United States. Due to the ongoing crisis in Venezuela, Venezuelans have consistently been the leading nationality requesting asylum in the United States since 2016. As of June 2023, U.N. agencies believe that over 7.3 million Venezuelans have fled the country, many of whom have resettled in neighboring countries like Colombia and Brazil.

Given Venezuela's increased instability, repression, and lack of safety, and within all applicable rules and regulations, we demand more information on why the Department has made this decision. We also strongly urge you to re-extend the TPS designation for Venezuela so that we can continue to provide safety and support to Venezuelans fleeing the political, economic and humanitarian crisis currently plaguing their home. The only justification that has been offered by the Administration is the false claim that all Venezuelans are "dirt bags", "violent criminals", or the "worst of the worst".

Finally, we express our strong opposition to any plans to provide the Maduro regime with the preservation of OFAC general licenses, which exclusively benefit transnational oil companies and Maduro's inner circle, or other forms of sanction relief in exchange for collaboration in the Administration's program of mass deportation.

Returning Venezuelan immigrants to a dictatorship that engages in torture, extrajudicial murder, and systematic abuse of human rights would be a death sentence for many of our friends and neighbors. Any corrupt bargain with Maduro that does not include a peaceful, democratic transition of power would legitimize his criminal rule, signal U.S. abandonment of the pro-democracy opposition, and undermine our regional objectives. This is particularly irresponsible after the Administration unilaterally cut off all funding in support of democracy, civil society, and humanitarian purposes for Venezuelans.

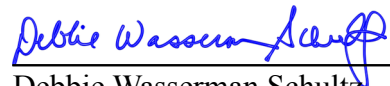
As such, in addition to an explanation of the decision to withdraw TPS from Venezuelans, we demand a briefing to inform Members of Congress of the Administration's secret negotiations with the Maduro regime conducted by Special Envoy Ric Grenell.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

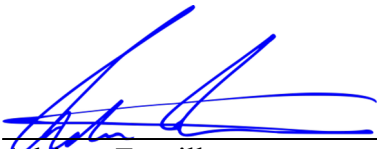
Sincerely,



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



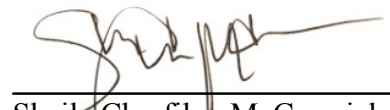
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



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Linda T. Sánchez

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