

**Statement for the Record**  
**U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary**  
**Hearing on Protecting Dreamers and TPS Recipients**  
**March 6, 2019**

African Communities Together (ACT) is an organization of African immigrants fighting for civil rights, opportunity, and a better life for our families here in the U.S. and worldwide. ACT empowers African immigrants to integrate socially, get ahead economically, and engage civically by connecting African immigrants to critical services, helping Africans develop as leaders, and organizing our communities on the issues that matter.

ACT is grateful to Chairman Nadler and members of the Committee for convening this very important hearing on protecting Dreamers and TPS recipients. We join the many organizations advocating on behalf of the more than 800,000 Dreamers and 300,000 TPS and DED holders whose lives hang in the balance. In particular, ACT seeks to highlight the urgent need for permanent legislative protection for Liberian DED holders.

Six of the 13 countries with TPS or DED in recent years have been African countries. TPS and DED have provided thousands of Africans, including most recently, those from Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan, with refuge in the United States during times of war or other extraordinary conditions at home. TPS and DED not only provide humanitarian protection, but also give holders the ability to earn a living, provide for their families, pay taxes, and contribute to their communities, while the conditions in their home countries prevent their safe return.

Unfortunately, the Trump Administration has begun the process of prematurely terminating TPS and DED protections. The Administration's actions have created an urgent need for permanent legislative protection. This urgency is even more acute among Liberian DED holders who will lose protection and become deportable after March 31, 2019.

Many Liberian DED holders have been protected by TPS and DED for the past 28 years. In March 1991, Liberians were first granted TPS protection in response to the 1989 outbreak of civil war. As the war raged on, TPS designation was extended several times until 1999. In 1999, upon expiration of their TPS designation, President Clinton provided Liberians with DED status, which President George W. Bush subsequently extended. The 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa led to a new TPS designation for Liberia. President Obama terminated TPS designation for Liberia in 2016, but provided DED protection. In March 2018, President Trump announced that DED for Liberians would not be extended and that Liberians would be required to leave the U.S. after a one-year wind-down period.

Despite these 28 years of constant limbo, current DED holders have managed to thrive and fully integrate into American society. They have gotten married, started families, built careers, bought homes, and grown businesses. It is simply unconscionable to uproot the productive lives of our friends and neighbors, separate some from their U.S.-born children, and force them to return to a country that is ill-prepared to handle their return. This is why Congress must pass legislation that addresses this urgent need for relief.

ACT again thanks the Committee for its attention to this issue and urges all members to support legislation that would provide permanent legal protections and a path to citizenship for TPS and DED holders as well as Dreamers.