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10TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
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May 6, 2015

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

Dear Secretary Johnson:

I am writing to express the views of my constituents and thousands of African immigrants from Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. First, I respectfully request that the deadline to apply for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) be extended from **May 20, 2015 to November 20, 2015**. Secondly, I strongly recommend U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) use language-specific and culturally-sensitive tactics to better serve the African immigrant community. Finally, as a strong supporter of the African immigrant community, I believe adequate outreach regarding their unique needs is vital.

Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone are not equipped to handle the return of thousands of individuals who have lived in the United States for decades. If we fail to allow adequate time to register for TPS, we threaten the infrastructure of these countries. We will also face the tragic mistake of displacing individuals who have been in the United States the majority of their lives. This extension is imperative.

On May 2, 2015, I hosted, in collaboration with the offices of U.S. Senators Robert Menendez and Cory Booker, an orientation on Temporary Protected Status to the Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone communities of New Jersey. I was told multiple times that there is not adequate outreach to African immigrants. There is currently a www.change.org petition, started by my constituents, to extend the TPS registration deadline. Many immigrants are not even aware that the deadline is swiftly approaching.

The United States has an extremely large African immigrant community. They should not be neglected. To ensure that there is national outreach to these communities, I strongly urge USCIS to take the appropriate steps. An increase in outreach is especially important to states with significant populations of West Africans, such as New Jersey, due to last year's Ebola epidemic.

Again, I respectfully urge you to give full and favorable consideration to this request. Should you need additional information, please contact my Chief of Staff, LaVerne Alexander, or me at (202)-225-3436.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "DMP, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress