

A RESOLUTION

23-278

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

December 3, 2019

To declare the sense of the Council to call upon Congress to enact legislation granting security and permanent legal status to residents living under the Temporary Protected Status program and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, including parents of United States citizens and recipients of these programs, to expand family-based legal immigration, and to ensure the prevention of the separation of families as a result of immigration status.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Sense of the Council Supporting the Protection of Immigrant Families Resolution of 2019”.

Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

(1) President Obama issued executive orders, which deferred deportation and provided work authorization for undocumented individuals brought to this country as minors and further established the practice of prosecutorial discretion to defer deportations (“DACA”) until Congress could arrive at a permanent solution. Despite the lack of a permanent solution to these residents’ status, the current administration has sought to cancel the DACA program, which provides just relief from the continued threat of deportation.

(2) At least 325,000 Salvadorans, Nicaraguans, Hondurans, and Haitians are living in the United States with Temporary Protected Status (“TPS”) and have established families, with 273,000 U.S. citizen children born to TPS holders. Nearly two-thirds of those with TPS came from El Salvador, and the largest population of Salvadoran TPS residents – over 32,000 – reside in the District of Columbia. Salvadorans and their families, whether U.S. citizens, residents with TPS, or residents with other immigration statuses, represent the largest Hispanic population in the Washington metropolitan region, and have contributed immeasurably to the District’s culture and economy.

(3) As a result of continued federal inaction, the livelihoods of TPS residents and their families and communities continue to be under threat. Salvadoran TPS eligibility was nearly revoked this calendar year, and though an extension was given until 2021, there is no

permanent solution for the continued U.S. residency of Salvadoran TPS recipients or an assured sense of security.

(4) There has been a 250% increase in deportations of those with no criminal records over the last year, with a majority of those deportations being comprised of individuals with families and children.

(5) The separation of children from their mothers or fathers, or both, is a violation of the human rights that should be afforded to all children. Undocumented children and children of undocumented parents are currently forced to endure the unimaginable pain and damage of family separation or deportation on a daily basis.

(6) The 5 million U.S. citizen children and 2 million children brought to this nation as infants should not be deprived of their right to remain with their families through unnecessary separations as the result of political inaction.

Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council that Congress should expeditiously pass legislation to create permanent protections for those under the DACA program and the TPS program, create a renewable and retroactive visa program for parents and spouses of U.S. citizens and parents and spouses of DACA recipients, craft a pathway to citizenship for DACA and TPS recipients, and reunite families separated at the border.

Sec. 4. Transmittal.

The Secretary to the Council shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the officers of both houses of Congress, to the committee chairs that have jurisdiction over District of Columbia affairs, to the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law, the Delegate to the House of Representatives from the District of Columbia, the Attorney General of the United States, and the Office of the Mayor.

Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately.