

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2478

To designate the Bahamas under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide temporary protected status under such section to eligible nationals of the Bahamas.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HARRIS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. JONES, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. CARDIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To designate the Bahamas under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide temporary protected status under such section to eligible nationals of the Bahamas.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Bahamas Temporary
5 Protected Status Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) On September 1, 2019, Hurricane Dorian
4 made landfall in the Bahamas as a category 5 hurri-
5 cane with sustained winds over 180 miles per hour.

6 (2) Between September 1, 2019, and Septem-
7 ber 3, 2019, the islands of the Bahamas and the Ba-
8 hamian people were subjected to hurricane-force
9 winds, heavy rains, and extensive flooding that de-
10 stroyed critical infrastructure, decimated houses and
11 property, and claimed the lives of at least 50 individ-
12 uals.

13 (3) The International Federation of the Red
14 Cross and Red Crescent Societies stated that more
15 than 60,000 individuals in the Bahamas lack access
16 to clean drinking water as a result of the devastation
17 caused by Hurricane Dorian.

18 (4) The World Food Programme indicates that
19 more than 60,000 individuals in the Bahamas will
20 require food relief as a result of the destruction
21 caused by Hurricane Dorian.

22 (5) The Secretary of Homeland Security may,
23 under section 244 of the Immigration and Nation-
24 ality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a), designate a foreign state
25 that has experienced an environmental disaster so as
26 to provide temporary protected status in the United

1 States to eligible nationals of such foreign state who
2 cannot return safely to their homeland.

3 **SEC. 3. DESIGNATION FOR PURPOSES OF GRANTING TEM-**
4 **PORARY PROTECTED STATUS.**

5 (a) DESIGNATION.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of section 244
7 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
8 1254a), the Bahamas shall be treated as if it had
9 been designated under subsection (b)(1)(B) of that
10 section, subject to the provisions of this section.

11 (2) PERIOD OF DESIGNATION.—The initial pe-
12 riod of the designation referred to in paragraph (1)
13 shall be for the 18-month period beginning on the
14 date of the enactment of this Act.

15 (b) ALIENS ELIGIBLE.—As a result of the designa-
16 tion made under subsection (a), an alien who is a national
17 of the Bahamas is considered to satisfy the requirements
18 under paragraph (1) of section 244(c) of the Immigration
19 and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)), subject to para-
20 graph (3) of such section, if the alien—

21 (1) has been continuously physically present in
22 the United States since the date of the enactment of
23 this Act;

24 (2) is admissible as an immigrant, except as
25 otherwise provided in paragraph (2)(A) of such sec-

1 tion, and is not ineligible for temporary protected
2 status under paragraph (2)(B) of such section; and

3 (3) registers for temporary protected status in
4 a manner established by the Secretary of Homeland
5 Security.

6 (c) CONSENT TO TRAVEL ABROAD.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland
8 Security shall give prior consent to travel abroad, in
9 accordance with section 244(f)(3) of the Immigra-
10 tion and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a(f)(3)), to
11 an alien who is granted temporary protected status
12 pursuant to the designation made under subsection
13 (a) if the alien establishes to the satisfaction of the
14 Secretary of Homeland Security that emergency and
15 extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the
16 alien require the alien to depart for a brief, tem-
17 porary trip abroad.

18 (2) TREATMENT UPON RETURN.—An alien re-
19 turning to the United States in accordance with an
20 authorization described in paragraph (1) shall be
21 treated as any other returning alien provided tem-
22 porary protected status under section 244 of the Im-
23 migration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a).

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