



Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
*UU advocacy in the nation's capital*



## Write Here! Write Now!

**Advocacy Corps will hand-deliver letters on March 10, 2020**

**Contact:** [advocacy@uusj.org](mailto:advocacy@uusj.org) or 703-786-5206.

**Delivery of Letters - Organizers:** By mail due Thurs., March 5 send to:

UUSJ c/o Lavona Grow, 2308 N. Buchanan St., Arlington, VA 22207

Emailed by Mon., March 9 by 12 pm ET to [advocacy@uusj.org](mailto:advocacy@uusj.org).

## Tell your US Senator to Provide a Pathway to Legal Permanent Status for Immigrant Families with Temporary Protected Status

The Safe Environment from Countries under Repression and Emergency (SECURE) Act of 2019 - S.879

As of 2020-01-17

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**Why are we writing - now?** Our Unitarian Universalist Principles compel us to affirm that all immigrants, regardless of legal status, should be treated justly and humanely. This is amplified by our denomination's 2013 Statement of Conscience on "Immigration as a Moral Issue." **Why now?** UUSJ is partnering in a nationwide WHWN letter-writing campaign with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and its partner, the Massachusetts TPS Committee. Details at [www.uusc.org/initiatives/](http://www.uusc.org/initiatives/) click on TPS action.

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**Background:** The Trump administration is dismantling major aspects of the U.S. immigration system by trying to terminate legal protections relied upon by immigrants who have lived in the United States under Temporary Protected Status (TPS). For decades, TPS has provided temporary legal status for more than 400,000 immigrants from specific countries facing war, natural disasters, and other deadly conditions. It allows **these individuals to work and remain safe from deportation.** Now, the administration wants to return these individuals to countries they left decades ago. Often, this would mean separating them from their children, many of whom are U.S. citizens. While the courts are delaying these deportations, more permanent solutions are needed.

To that end, Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and seven colleagues, Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Diane Feinstein (D-CA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Tina Smith (D-MN), introduced the **Safe Environment from Countries under Repression and Emergency (SECURE) Act of 2019 - S.879** on March 26. The SECURE ACT creates a path to lawful permanent residency for TPS holders. The bill was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee and 24 more senators joined as co-sponsors. The Senate Leadership has not yet taken action on the bill. The House passed a corresponding bill **The American Dream and Promise Act - H.R.6** on June 4 and sent it to the Senate. The bill includes a path to citizenship for TPS holders.

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**UU Grounding:** Our 1st UU Principle affirms the inherent worth and dignity of all people. And our 2nd Principle calls for justice, equity and compassion in human relations. UUs have faithfully fought for compassionate immigration reform and an end to mass detention and deportation. We strongly support a just and equitable reform of our nation's immigration laws. In the meantime, we ask Congress to take immediate action to alleviate the suffering of thousands of immigrants. No human being is illegal.

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**Key Message and ASK:** The US Senate should move quickly to act on the **Safe Environment from Countries Under Repression and Emergency (SECURE) Act of 2019 - S.879**. Urge your Senator to co-sponsor [if not already co-sponsoring](#) and support passage of S.879. If already co-sponsoring, thank your senator(s). No Republicans have yet signed on to the bill. You'll find a list of co-sponsors at ([www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov)).

(see other side for suggested talking points and sample letter)

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## Suggested Talking Points

*[Use your own examples, tell your story or draw on these points]*

- **Most TPS holders have been in the United States for years, even decades, and are contributing members of our communities and economy.** They add to our country's diversity. Many are part of mixed-status families that include U.S. citizens (often youth or young adults).
- **A recent study reports that TPS holders pay \$4.6 billion each year in federal and state taxes and contribute \$690 million a year to Social Security.** As our partners at the TPS Alliance put it, "We paid our dues."
- On average, Salvadorans with TPS have lived here for 23 years; Hondurans, 24 years; and Haitians, 18 years. **They are parents, employers, workers, neighbors, and friends.**
- **Deporting TPS holders is inhumane, short-sighted and is contrary to our UU and American values.** Historically, our country has welcomed immigrants to build the nation, keep the economy running and unite families.
- **Cancelling TPS is a form of family separation.** Some 620,000 individuals live in a household with a family member protected by TPS. More than 300,000 of these individuals are U.S. citizens under the age of 18. Deporting the TPS family member would tear the family apart or force children who are U.S. citizens to follow their parents to countries they do not know. They could also face violence and/or poverty.

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## Sample Letter to Your Senators

*[Use your own words. Speak from your heart -- this is only a sample letter.]*

*[Today's date]*

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_, *[write to both of your US Senators]*

I am a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]*. Guided by my faith, I believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people and that no human being is illegal. I stand in solidarity with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders who have lived and worked here peacefully for decades.

I urge you to take immediate action to pass the Safe Environment from Countries Under Repression and Emergency (SECURE) Act of 2019 - S.879 to support pathways to legal permanent residence for holders of TPS. Please provide people who have been part of our communities and contributed to our economy for years with a path to citizenship. This will also help alleviate their fears of being deported or losing their jobs and families. The United States is their home.

*[Insert personal experience or pick one talking point in your own words, to support the main message.]*

*[Adapt a closing such as...]* Thank you for your consideration of my [concerns/story]. I look forward to your response. etc.)

Sincerely, *[YOUR NAME and COMPLETE ADDRESS must be Included to be counted - proves that you are a constituent. And include your EMAIL optional-some offices like to respond by email.]*

(See other side for Why We Are Writing, Background, UU Grounding, Message and ASK)