



# VANESSA'S STORY

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*Keywords: TPS, El Salvador*

*Vanessa is an advocate for the rights of immigrants with Temporary Protected Status. She lives in the Bay Area with her husband and three children.*

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**“My husband and I arrived in the United States 20 years ago from El Salvador, fleeing violence, insecurity, and a lack of opportunities. We brought with us a bag full of dreams and all the energy of a young couple willing to work hard to fulfill those dreams. Shortly after we left, El Salvador was the epicenter of two major earthquakes that devastated almost every corner of the country. The United States government saw the desperate need of Salvadorans and in 2001 granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Salvadorans who were in the U.S. before the earthquakes. TPS was a blessing that helped us fully integrate into our community and the United States society and economy.**


**We were able to achieve almost all our dreams during these 20 years. We bought a house and became parents of three beautiful children. We rejoiced when our eldest daughter graduated from high school with honors, fluent in three languages, setting an example for her siblings. She was accepted into her dream school, the University of California-Berkeley, to pursue her own dreams as a first-generation American.**

***We are proud to say that with our faith, hard work, and the opportunity that was given to us through TPS, we were able to achieve the American Dream.***

**Ever since the Trump administration started trying to cancel TPS, everything that we achieved is on shaky ground. We are having trouble believing that after 20 years of contributing to the**



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contributing to the economy, building a life, and becoming part of this great nation, we are not welcome anymore. Politicians seem to think it is easy to pack your life into a suitcase and leave to a country that you haven't lived in for two decades and that continues to be unstable. It feels cruel to terminate the TPS program without any remorse or analysis of the consequences, and without looking for alternative solutions for us to remain legally in the U.S.

By terminating TPS, the administration is taking away the rights of our children to be with their parents. **It is harsh and unfair to force children to choose between their safety, economic stability, and dreams, and their ability to be with their parents at an age when they are fully dependent on us.** As is happening in many TPS households, our children are showing signs of stress, desperation, and uncertainty over this agonizing situation. They can't stop thinking about the day when their lives will be shattered. Almost a quarter million American children will face separation if nothing is done to save TPS. Please do not separate our families.


## TPS Context

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a provisional designation granted to immigrants in the U.S. who cannot return to their home countries due to violence, natural disasters, epidemics, or other extraordinary conditions. Since the early 1990s, TPS has allowed holders to legally work on a temporary basis.

As of February 2022, there are approximately 354,625 people with TPS from 16 countries – [Afghanistan](#), [Burma \(Myanmar\)](#), [Cameroon](#), [El Salvador](#), [Ethiopia](#), [Haiti](#), [Honduras](#), [Nepal](#), [Nicaragua](#), [Somalia](#), [South Sudan](#), [Sudan](#), [Syria](#), [Ukraine](#), [Venezuela](#), [Yemen](#).

Many TPS holders have been in the country for decades due to multiple extensions. TPS currently does not allow a person to become a permanent resident, naturalize as a U.S. citizen, or receive public benefits.

TPS for El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Nepal, Haiti, Sudan was set to expire on Dec. 31, 2022, but due to the ongoing litigation and injunctions an automatic 18-month extension was granted, with protections now lasting until June 20, 2024. Still,



without congressional legislation, TPS holders will continue to be treated with the loss of status and deportation.

If TPS holders are deported, families who have been in the U.S. for decades will be torn apart. TPS countries are still deeply affected by devastating natural disasters, epidemics, and violence (conditions that are often exacerbated by U.S. policies); they are unstable and not able to reabsorb so many returnees.

**Take Action** – call your Senators and Representatives. Let them know you are a constituent and that “I support the Dream and Promise Act, the Secure Act, and other legislation to guarantee a path to permanent residency for all TPS holders.

[Find your elected officials.](#)

**Video:** [Keep TPS Families Together](#)