



# GISELA'S STORY

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I am a 60-year-old Salvadoran and a TPS holder. I came to this country in 1991, right after the last guerilla offensive during the civil war. I feel very grateful to the United States government for allowing me to stay here legally for more than 18 years.

However, the emotional price that I have had to pay has been very high. I had no choice but to leave my three young children – my 5-year-old son and my two daughters, 9 and 12 years old – in order to survive. It took me 24 years before I could see them again.

During those 24 years, I cried every single day, hoping one day to hug and kiss my children again. Several close relatives – my mother, oldest niece, and sister – passed away during that time, and I wasn't able to say goodbye. This was very disturbing and painful to me.

In the middle of all my losses, I attended college night classes and worked full-time. In May of 2013, I got my degree in Early Childhood Education with honors. Presently, I am a site supervisor in a preschool in Oakland, California.

In October 2015, my father had a massive heart attack. I obtained permission from the immigration authorities to go back to my country to see him. For the first time in 24 years, I was able to hug my children and my dad.

Eight months later my father had a stroke, so in July of 2016 I was permitted to return to El Salvador to see my father, perhaps for the last time. My father is still alive, but his health has deteriorated.

What will happen if, as a result of the discontinuance of the TPS program, I am deported back to El Salvador? How will I find work in El Salvador when employers refuse to hire workers who are older than 36 years old?



EAST BAY  
SANCTUARY  
COVENANT

**I have been in the United States for 27 years, working and paying taxes even before I was able to obtain my work permit. I paid income tax and premiums for health insurance that I rarely use. My contributions to this country have been 100%. I have also supported my unemployed father and children.**

**Now that TPS holders are at risk of losing our work permits, my stress and anxiety have increased, and my health is deteriorating. Yet I must keep my sanity in order to perform at my job. TPS holders are productive, contributing members of this society and country, but without permanent legal status.**

**We have earned what we are asking for. Please look at us as people—not numbers—and give us the opportunity to become permanent residents.**

**We are human beings who are desperate to get the peace of mind that we can only have if we are granted our legal status to live and contribute to this society.**

**You have the power to help make this come true. Please do what is morally right. Please help us obtain our legal status here in the U.S.**

