

## Rothman Calls On U.S. To Issue Temporary Protected Status To Colombian Nationals

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Washington, DC - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today issued the following statement calling on the United States government to issue Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Colombian nationals currently living in the United States.

"Temporary Protected Status (TPS) provides relief from deportation to those from designated countries who are for the time being unable to return to their homeland because of ongoing armed conflict, environmental disasters, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. In offering temporary refuge to the world's most desperate people, the United States has consistently demonstrated the goodness and respect for individual human beings that is at the core of its values. Given the extraordinarily unstable and violent situation in Colombia, it is clear that granting TPS for Colombians is the morally and ethically right thing for the United States to do and highly consistent with the United States' granting of TPS in the past.

"Colombians currently in the United States should not be forced to return to a homeland that is in utter turmoil - currently threatened by terrorists, guerillas, and drug cartels. If my dear Colombian friends were to be sent home, they would be forced to confront one of the most dangerous political climates in the world. It is a place where kidnappings and the torturing of innocent men, women, and children occur regularly along with the constant threat of being caught in the middle of gunfire.

"To send our Colombian friends home would be in direct contradiction of everything that this great nation, the United States, is all about. We are a nation of compassion and we are a nation that time and again has offered itself as a sanctuary for political refugees from around the world. The case of Colombia is no different. In the past, America has granted TPS to those who have come from Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America. We have helped save the lives of people from Angola, Bosnia Herzegovina, Burundi, El Salvador, Honduras, Kosovo, Kuwait, Lebanon, Montserrat, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan. And now, we must help provide refuge and opportunities for those from Colombia.

"I will continue to fight for TPS for Colombians and will make clear to Attorney General John Ashcroft, who has direct jurisdiction over issuing TPS, and the entire Bush Administration that granting TPS for Colombians is the moral and just thing to do."

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