



## Legislation Text

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### Preconsidered Res. No. 1463

Resolution calling upon the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to re-designate and extend Temporary Protected Status for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as these countries have not recovered from the Ebola epidemic and it would be unsafe for nationals currently present in the United States to return home at this time

By Council Members Rose, the Speaker (Council Member Mark-Viverito) and Menchaca

Whereas, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone underwent a significant public health emergency from 2014 to 2016 due to the outbreak of Ebola and are still recovering from the crisis the outbreak caused in their respective countries; and

Whereas, The most recent outbreak is believed to have started in a village in Guinea in December 2013; and

Whereas, As of February 28, 2016, there were 28,639 suspected, probable, and confirmed cases of Ebola and 11,316 deaths from Ebola during the 2014 epidemic in West Africa, where, in comparison, there were 2,427 reported cases and 1,597 deaths in all other known cases and outbreaks of Ebola combined; and

Whereas, Approximately 17,300 children lost one or both parents to Ebola during the 2014 outbreak; and

Whereas, The affected countries, which are among the poorest countries in the world, had only recently emerged from years of civil war and unrest that left basic health infrastructures severely damaged or destroyed; and

Whereas, Prior to the Ebola outbreaks, the three countries already had a ratio of only one to two doctors per nearly 100,000 population; and

Whereas, After the 2014 Ebola outbreak, the Center for Disease Control estimated an 8% decrease in the healthcare workforce in Liberia and a 23% decrease in health services delivery in Sierra Leone; and

Whereas, The reduction in access to healthcare services because of Ebola caused an estimated 10,600

additional deaths due to untreated conditions in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone; and

Whereas, The affected countries are now suffering from a rise in non-Ebola-related illnesses and deaths, which have attributed to the widespread collapse of already fragile health systems; and

Whereas, Furthermore, \$2.2 billion in GDP was lost in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone in 2015 in the aftermath of the outbreak, threatening not only macroeconomic stability but also food security, human capital development, and private sector growth; and

Whereas, Sierra Leone, for example, lost approximately half of its private work force after the outbreak; and

Whereas, The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the authority to designate a country for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in the event that its nationals are unable to safely return to that country due to ongoing armed conflict, an environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent safe return; and

Whereas, During the temporary designation period, eligible nationals may apply individually for TPS and, if approved, may not be detained by the DHS based solely on immigration status, and may remain in the United States, and obtain employment and travel authorization; and

Whereas, Once the Secretary of the DHS terminates a TPS designation, TPS beneficiaries revert to the same immigration status they had prior to obtaining TPS, or to any other status they may have acquired while registered for TPS; and

Whereas, Those who did not previously have or acquire lawful immigration status must depart from the United States upon termination of TPS status; and

Whereas, On November 21, 2014, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone were designated for TPS on account of the Ebola epidemic; and

Whereas, As of January 2017, there are approximately 1,180 Sierra Leone TPS recipients, approximately 2,160 Liberian TPS recipients, and approximately 930 Guinea TPS recipients due to the Ebola crisis; and

Whereas, On September 22, 2016, the DHS announced their intention to terminate the TPS designations for these countries, claiming that the wide-spread transmission of the Ebola virus that lead to the designations

for TPS had ended; and

Whereas, At that time, the DHS extended TPS benefits for each of the three countries for an additional 6 months for the purpose of orderly transition; and

Whereas, The termination of the TPS designations for Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone will become effective May 21, 2017; and

Whereas, There are significant remaining economic, social, and political challenges for the three governments to tackle before it can accept the return of its nationals; and

Whereas, These continued circumstances make it unsafe for nationals of the affected countries currently in the United States to return to their country of origin; and

Whereas, On account of the continued dangerous conditions in the affected countries United States Congress Members Donald M. Payne Jr., Jose E. Serrano, Yvette D. Clarke, and Keith Ellison launched a letter writing campaign asking Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly to re-designate Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone for TPS; and

Whereas, New York City Council Member Debi Rose also called upon Secretary Kelly to re-designate the countries for TPS, highlighting the dearth of adequate healthcare and the grave economic situations that either resulted from, or were exacerbated by, the recent Ebola epidemic in the affected countries; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to re-designate and extend Temporary Protected Status for Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as these countries have not recovered from the recent Ebola epidemic and it would be unsafe for nationals currently present in the United States to return home at this time.

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