



How Ending TPS Will Hurt U.S.-Citizen Children

By Leila Schochet and Nicole Prchal Svajlenka February 11, 2019

Over the past two years, the Trump administration has taken steps to strip protections from hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the United States with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), including for nationals from countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. The termination of TPS could have repercussions that affect both immigrants holding the status as well as their families, including 279,200 U.S.-citizen children under age 18 living with family members from these countries.¹ Currently, multiple lawsuits are challenging the administration’s attempts to end TPS.² However, should the terminations stand, after an average of 22 years living and working lawfully in the United States, Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Haitians with TPS would face an unimaginable decision.³

This fact sheet highlights the harmful effects that ending TPS could have on TPS holders’ children specifically and outlines three scenarios that could play out should the courts side with the Trump administration.

Scenario 1: Parents return, or are returned, to their country of origin while their children remain in the United States. Separating children from their families can cause emotional distress and economic insecurity and have significant, lasting consequences for children’s development.

- Children separated from their deported parents often show signs of trauma, such as depression, anxiety, frequent crying, difficulties in school, and disrupted eating and sleeping.⁴
- The effects of persistent stress can affect a child for their entire life, resulting in challenges with learning, behavior, emotion regulation, and physical health.⁵

Scenario 2: Parents return, or are returned, to their country of origin, taking their U.S.-citizen children with them and bringing them to countries facing severe, persistent challenges.

- The U.S. Department of State has issued travel warnings due to crime and civil unrest in El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. Meanwhile, numerous emails from U.S. Department of Homeland Security and cables from State Department consular staff underscore that conditions have not improved enough to send TPS holders back and that doing so would undermine regional stability and harm U.S. interests.⁶
- Taking these children to their parents’ home countries—areas that generally have higher rates of violence and fewer educational opportunities⁷—would be disruptive and expose them to serious danger.⁸

TABLE 1

More than one-quarter of a million U.S.-citizen children live in households with family members who hold Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

Number of children with TPS family members, by state

Arkansas:	4,200 children
California:	43,500 children
Colorado:	2,500 children
Florida:	37,200 children
Georgia:	8,000 children
Illinois:	2,600 children
Indiana:	3,300 children
Kansas:	3,700 children
Maryland:	23,900 children
Massachusetts:	3,400 children
Nebraska:	2,400 children
Nevada:	3,100 children
New Jersey:	13,300 children
New York:	23,600 children
North Carolina:	9,800 children
Pennsylvania:	3,500 children
South Carolina:	1,500 children
Tennessee:	3,800 children
Texas:	49,000 children
Utah:	2,900 children
Virginia:	19,200 children
Washington:	2,600 children
United States:	279,200 children

Note: Data are presented for states with more than 1,500 children living in families with TPS beneficiaries. Source: Center for American Progress analysis of 2017 1-year American Community Survey microdata. Data accessed via Steven Ruggles and others, “Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 1-year estimates” (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2018), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

Scenario 3: Parents remain in the United States, losing their protection from deportation and work authorization. Living in constant fear of deportation weighs on all family members.

- Children as young as 3 years old are cognizant that their parent could be deported.⁹ Educators and other adults report widespread fear, anxiety, and behavioral changes among children in the immigrant community.¹⁰
- Even the potential threat of separation can cause children emotional distress. Studies show that children of immigrants experience feelings of vulnerability and fear of deportation and can experience psychological distress after simply hearing about families who are separated.¹¹
- Increased stress related to deportation among parents and caregivers is associated with decreased emotional well-being and poorer academic outcomes among their children.¹²

As legal challenges to ending TPS work their way through the courts, parents and children are dealing with the stress of an uncertain future. Congress must protect these children's parents, offering them a pathway to citizenship in the country that nearly all TPS holders have called home for decades.

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Endnotes

- 1 CAP analysis of 2017 one-year American Community Survey microdata. Data accessed via Steven Ruggles and others, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, U.S. Census Data for Social, Economic, and Health Research, 2017 American Community Survey: 1-year estimates" (Minneapolis: Minnesota Population Center, 2018), available at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/>. This measure includes children under the age of 18 who are U.S. citizens living in a household with a family member who holds TPS. Data reflect TPS holders from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti, making up 94 percent of all TPS holders.
- 2 For a list of lawsuits, see Jennifer Riddle, "Challenges to TPS terminations," Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., available at <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/challenges-tps-terminations> (last accessed February 2019).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Immigration, "Crossroads: The Psychology of Immigration in the New Century" (Washington: 2012), available at https://www.apa.org/images/immigration-report_tcm7-134644.pdf.
- 5 National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, "Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children's Learning and Development" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, 2010), available at <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Persistent-Fear-and-Anxiety-Can-Affect-Young-Childrens-Learning-and-Development.pdf>.
- 6 U.S. Department of State, "El Salvador Travel Advisory," January 29, 2019, available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/el-salvador-travel-advisory.html>; U.S. Department of State, "Haiti Travel Advisory," January 18, 2019, available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/haiti-travel-advisory.html>; U.S. Department of State, "Honduras Travel Advisory," September 20, 2018, available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/honduras-travel-advisory.html>; Tal Kopan, "It IS bad there': Emails reveal Trump officials pushing for immigrant protection terminations," CNN, August 27, 2018, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/24/politics/trump-administration-tps-end/index.html>; U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "Department of State Recommendation Regarding Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti – 2017" (Washington: 2017), available at <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Discretionary%20Re-release%20TPS%20.pdf>.
- 7 Silva Mathema, "They Are (Still) Refugees: People Continue to Flee Violence in Latin American Countries" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2018), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2018/06/01/451474/still-refugees-people-continue-flee-violence-latin-american-countries/>.
- 8 Randy Capps and others, "Implications of Immigration Enforcement Activities for the Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families: A Review of the Literature" (Washington: Migration Policy Institute, 2015), available at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/implications-immigration-enforcement-activities-well-being-children-immigrant-families>; Nick Miroff, Seung Min Kim, and Joshua Partlow, "U.S. embassy cables warned against expelling 300,000 immigrants. Trump officials did it anyway," *The Washington Post*, May 8, 2018, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-embassy-cables-warned-against-expelling-300000-immigrants-trump-officials-did-it-anyway/2018/05/08/065e5702-4fe5-11e8-b966-bfb0da2dad62_story.html?utm_term=.26a8ce450da8.
- 9 Wendy Cervantes, Rebecca Ullrich and Hannah Matthews, "Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children" (Washington: Center for Law and Social Policy, 2018), available at https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018/03/2018_ourchildrensfears.pdf.
- 10 Cervantes, Ullrich, and Matthews, "Our Children's Fear"; Maureen B. Costello, "The Trump Effect: The impact of the presidential campaign on our nation's schools" (Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016), available at https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/splc_the_trump_effect.pdf.
- 11 Capps and others, "Implications of Immigration Enforcement Activities for the Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families."
- 12 Kalina M. Brabeck and Qingwen Xu, "The Impact of Detention and Deportation on Latino Immigrant Children and Families: A Quantitative Exploration," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 32 (3) (2010): 341–361, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247721989_The_Impact_of_Detention_and_Deportation_on_Latino_Immigrant_Children_and_Families_A_Quantitative_Exploration; Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Erin B. Godfrey, and Ann C. Rivera, "Access to institutional resources as a measure of social exclusion: relations with family process and cognitive development in the context of immigration," *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 121 (2008) (2008): 63–86, available at <https://nyuscholars.nyu.edu/en/publications/access-to-institutional-resources-as-a-measure-of-social-exclusion>.