



Durbin Urges Senate to Pass Bipartisan, House-Passed Venezuela Tps Legislation

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WASHINGTON – In a speech on the Senate floor, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today called on Senate Republicans to support the bipartisan, House-passed legislation that would designate Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and protect approximately 200,000 Venezuelan nationals in the United States from deportation. Durbin and Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) have repeatedly made unanimous consent (UC) requests to immediately pass the [*Venezuela TPS Act of 2019*](#) on the Senate floor, but Senate Republicans have blocked every request. This bipartisan bill passed the House more than three months ago by a vote of 272-158. This legislation is only needed because the President, who could immediately grant TPS to Venezuelans without Congressional action, refuses to do so.

“Ironically, while the President’s Department of State has issued travel warnings advising Americans not to visit Venezuela because of the danger, this President still won’t protect Venezuelans within the United States who are afraid to return,” Durbin said. “Senate Republicans could pass the bipartisan House bill to grant Venezuelans Temporary Protected Status, but the Senate Republicans refuse. So let everyone be clear where the real failure to help Venezuelans actually rests.”

Last week, Senator Rick Scott (R-FL) blocked the bipartisan, House-passed *Venezuela TPS Act of 2019* and offered his own amendment that would undermine TPS for others at the price of helping Venezuelans. His proposal would significantly weaken the entire TPS program; for example, the Scott bill would require Congressional approval of any extension of TPS, and it would limit such an extension to an arbitrary 18-month period.

“Ultimately, the junior Senator from Florida’s proposal is using the plight of Venezuelans to basically gut the existing Temporary Protected Status program,” Durbin said. “Once again, these members are simply refusing to stand up to the President when he fails on these issues.”

Video of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor are available [here](#).

Audio of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).

Footage of Durbin's remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#) for TV Stations.

In February, Durbin and Menendez, along with Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), and Cory Booker (D-NJ) introduced the [*Venezuela Temporary Protected Status Act of 2019*](#), a bill to immediately grant TPS for eligible Venezuelans fleeing the dire conditions in their home country and to strengthen migration systems in the countries surrounding Venezuela.

In July, in a letter from controversial Acting U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Ken Cuccinelli, responding to a bipartisan request led by Durbin and Menendez, the Trump Administration [stated](#) that it will not designate Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

In March, Durbin and Menendez led 24 Senators in a bipartisan [letter](#) to President Trump requesting that his Administration promptly designate Venezuela for TPS to ensure that Venezuelan nationals currently present in the United States are not forced to return to Venezuela at this time.

Last year, Durbin [traveled](#) to Venezuela where he met with then-President Nicolas Maduro, members of the opposition included Juan Guaidó, the President of the National Assembly, the Ministers of Health and Nutrition, business leaders, civil society groups, doctors, and humanitarian organizations.