

October 17, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Nebraska Avenue Complex  
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20395

Cc: Rachel E. Canty, Director of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program

**Re: Request Special Student Relief and TPS or DED for Pakistanis in the United States**

Dear President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas:

Due to devastating flooding that left one-third of Pakistan underwater, the undersigned 101 organizations write to support a [Senate request](#) that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) to individuals from Pakistan, and also to ask DHS-SEVP to grant [Special Student Relief \(SSR\)](#) to F-1 students from Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> The [United Nations Refugee Agency \(UNHCR\) reports](#) that the flooding has affected “over 30 million people in Pakistan,” left “6.4 million people in need of immediate support,” and displaced “hundreds of thousands” of people.

TPS and DED are crucial tools the Biden administration has at its disposal to safeguard vulnerable people in the United States when safe return to their home countries is impossible. Crucially, Congress gave the power to designate TPS to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (as opposed to a determination by Congress) so administrations can work quickly to put protection in place at the onset of life-threatening conditions due to conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary conditions.

The most [recent data posted in the SEVP Data Library \(2020\)](#) shows that there were 8,638 active SEVIS records for students with Pakistan listed as their country of citizenship. As the impacts of the flooding continue, F-1 students from Pakistan would greatly benefit from the availability of Special Student Relief, which allows DHS to suspend the 20-hour per week limits on incident-to-status on-campus and USCIS-authorized off-campus employment, and for students to be considered engaged in a “full course of study” for the duration of their employment authorization if they satisfy specific minimum course load requirements.

Given the rapidly emerging consequences of the flooding, we ask that you consider and support this request, and to please forward it quickly through the necessary channels within the Department.

We also urge you to share the letter with the U.S. Department of State for their consideration as relief is contemplated for exchange visitors from Pakistan who are here as exchange visitors.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulations allow DHS to suspend or alter rules regarding duration of status, full course of study, and employment eligibility, for specific groups of students from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. This collection of benefits is known as “special student relief.” [63 Fed. Reg. 31872 (June 10, 1998), amending the Code of Federal Regulations governing F-1 duration of status at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(5), full course of study at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f)(6)(A) and (B), and employment eligibility at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (f) (9) (i) and (ii)].

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request for Special Student Relief and TPS or DED to aid the challenges students from Pakistan are currently facing. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jill Welch ([jill@presidentsalliance.org](mailto:jill@presidentsalliance.org)) and Krystina François ([krystina@wearecusp.org](mailto:krystina@wearecusp.org)).

Sincerely,

**National**

Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus  
African Communities Together  
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
American Immigration Lawyers Association  
Amnesty International USA  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)  
Bridges Faith Initiative  
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies  
Church World Service  
Climate Refugees  
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)  
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes  
Council on American-Islamic Relations  
Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose  
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill  
Franciscan Action Network  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
Haitian Bridge Alliance  
Hispanic Federation  
Human Rights First  
ICNA Council for Social Justice  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center  
Immigration Hub  
InReach  
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)  
Islamic Relief USA  
Justice Committee Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Albany  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)  
MPower Change  
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse  
National Employment Law Project  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Organization for Women  
Northeastern University School of Law Immigrant Justice Clinic  
Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration  
Sisters of Charity Federation  
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership  
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
Sisters of St Joseph of Carondelet

Sunrise Movement  
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)  
UndocuBlack Network  
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)

**State/Local**

Adhikaar  
Advokato  
African Services Committee  
Al Otro Lado  
Alianza Sacramento  
AMEXCAN  
Ayuda  
Benedictine Sisters of Chicago  
CAIR-Georgia  
Catholic Charities of SW Kansas  
Central American Resource Center  
Centro Romero  
Chacon Center for Immigrant Justice at Maryland Carey Law  
Church of Our Saviour/La Iglesia de Nuestro Salvador  
Church Women United in New York State  
Colorado Jobs with Justice  
Comité TPS Massachusetts  
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington DC  
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving  
Envision Freedom Fund  
Georgia Muslim Voter Project  
Greater Boston Legal Services  
¡HICA! Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama  
Immaculate Heart Community Commission on Justice for Immigrants and Refugees  
Immigrant Defenders Law Center  
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project  
International Institute of New England  
InterReligious Task Force on Central America  
Jewish Voice for Peace, Atlanta chapter  
Just Neighbors Ministry  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)  
Mother of God Monastery  
Muslims for Just Futures  
New York Immigration Coalition  
New York Legal Assistance Group  
OLA RAZA INC  
Pennsylvania Council of Churches  
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium  
Sisters of Saint Joseph. Brentwood  
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York  
Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston  
South Texas Human Rights Center

St. James Cathedral Immigrant Assistance  
The Advocates for Human Rights  
TRUE ALLIANCE CENTER INC/ HAU  
United African Organization  
Wallingford Indivisible  
Wayne Action for Racial Equality  
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.  
Wilco Justice Alliance (Williamson County, TX)  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center