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Raising Women's Voices-New York ☞ Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy ☞ Young Invincibles

**Memorandum in Support of A.3316/S.1809  
May 2018**

*An Act to amend the Social Services Law, in relation to ensuring that temporary protected status beneficiaries continue to receive Medicaid benefits*

Health Care for All New York (“HCFANY”) is a statewide coalition of over 170 organizations dedicated to achieving quality, affordable health coverage for all New Yorkers. We strive to bring consumer voices to the policy conversation, ensuring that the concerns of real New Yorkers are heard and reflected. **HCFANY strongly supports A.3316/S.1809, which would ensure that Temporary Protected Status beneficiaries are eligible for Medicaid benefits even if the federal government ends the program.**

Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, is a designation for nationals of countries experiencing humanitarian crises such as violent conflict, environmental disasters, or disease epidemics. TPS holders receive work authorizations and many have been in their communities in the U.S. for more than 20 years. There are an estimated 325,000 TPS holders in the U.S., who have nearly 300,000 U.S.-born children. In New York, there are 33,600 people with TPS from one of the current 10 TPS-designated countries. However, the Trump Administration is aggressively moving to rescind TPS and has already announced the end of the program for citizens of seven of the 10 countries. Citizens of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone have already lost TPS. Citizens of Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador will lose TPS between November 2018 and September 2019.

Because of the Affordable Care Act, TPS holders are considered “lawfully present” and therefore eligible to enroll in qualified health plans and receive tax credits and subsidies through New York State of Health if they meet other eligibility criteria. Low-income TPS holders are eligible for the Essential Plan if they meet the income guidelines because of the State’s commitment to covering immigrant communities excluded from Medicaid by federal law. Additionally, many TPS holders have employer-sponsored insurance because of the work authorizations they have as a result of their immigration status. New Yorkers with TPS currently stand to lose all of these health benefits if their TPS is terminated.

It is incumbent upon New York State to stand as a bulwark against the anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric of the federal government and to protect the health insurance coverage of New Yorkers with TPS. A.3316/S.1809 achieves this in part by ensuring that TPS holders are

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eligible for Medicaid even after their TPS is terminated. While this bill does not protect all existing coverage options for TPS holders, it represents an important step in demonstrating New York's commitment to maintain existing immigrant health coverage options.

The consequences of losing coverage cannot be overstated. People without coverage are more likely to delay seeking preventive care for serious and chronic health conditions and avoid seeking care for fear of costs. They are also at higher risk of incurring medical debt or bankruptcy. Furthermore, research demonstrates that gaps in coverage lead to cost inefficiencies and waste. Individuals and families without access to coverage are more likely to be sicker and die sooner. Hospitals are asked to provide care for which they may not be reimbursed, and which patients may not be able to afford on their own.

Many TPS holders are raising families, working in or starting New York State businesses, and contributing positively to their communities in myriad ways. Facilitating the maintenance of health coverage through A.3316/S.1809 is an important step in keeping these immigrant families integrated in their communities and strengthening their ability to work and contribute to the state and local economy. HCFANY therefore supports A.3316/S.1809 and urges the Legislature to pass this bill.