



SYRIAN TPS HOLDERS, INCLUDING DOCTORS, DAYS AWAY FROM LOSING JOBS DUE TO USCIS DELAYS

USCIS must issue an automatic extension for work permits before the deadline

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Washington, DC—Work permits for Syrian Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, holders are set to [expire](#) on September 27th, just days away. Yet many who properly applied months ago to renew their work permits have not received their new documents from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This is not the first time USCIS delays have threatened the livelihood of TPS holders, as thousands risked losing their permission to work due to severe delays under the [previous administration](#), including those from Syria. Now the Biden administration is poised to repeat the same failure with Syrian TPS holders once again.

Hazem Rihawi, Senior Programs Manager at the American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS) stated: “We do not know exactly how many Syrians are affected but in a recent survey of 104 Syrian TPS holders, only 12 people had received their paperwork. There are roughly 6,700 current Syrian TPS holders depending on receiving their documents in time to support their families, themselves, and their communities.”

A doctor and the only full-time cardiologist with a particular specialty at a VA hospital reached out to ARCS and stated: **“If I do not receive my new Employment Authorization Document, I will simply lose my job. It will be a disaster for me and for the hospital as well. I do lifesaving procedures and the service relies on me.”** Another Syrian TPS holder told ARCS: **“I will be terminated from my job on the 27th [the day EAD expires] as a teaching assistant at the university [I work at and attend] and will lose my graduate studies fellowship. I will also not be able to pay for rent.”**

“The status of Syrians on TPS has been a forefront issue for our community. We have made sure to champion the voices of Syrian TPS holders whose livelihoods are often left to the whim of unnecessary politics and bureaucracy.” said Suzanne Meriden, Executive Director of the Syrian American Council (SAC). “Syria is not safe for return and USCIS and the Biden administration must set a precedent of ensuring access to vital income and employment sources for those who have left everything they have known behind.”

“History is repeating itself. We saw the effect this issue had on TPS recipients from Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras and Syria under the previous administration,” said Lisa Parisio, Director of Advocacy at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC). “Given that, the failure to anticipate the issue and act well in advance is inexcusable. Processing delays and other implementation issues at USCIS have serious human consequences, including jeopardizing people’s livelihood and causing needless stress, anxiety, and other harm.”

ARCS, CLINIC, and SAC call on USCIS to immediately publish a Federal Register Notice automatically extending work permits for Syrians on TPS for at least another six months and taking steps to ensure other TPS holders and their employers do not have to face this issue going forward.

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