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## Memorandum of Support

### **A Bill to Preserve Health Access For Immigrants with Temporary Protected Status**

#### **A. 10607-A/S. 7569-A**

Empire Justice Center supports the passage A. 10607-A (Solages)/S. 7569-A (Sepulveda), which would ensure that Temporary Protected Status beneficiaries are eligible for Medicaid benefits even if the federal government ends the program. Empire Justice Center is a statewide legal services organization with offices in Albany, Rochester, Westchester and Central Islip (Long Island). Empire Justice provides support and training to legal services and other community based organizations, undertakes policy research and analysis, and engages in legislative and administrative advocacy. We also represent low income individuals, as well as classes of New Yorkers, in a wide range of areas including health, immigration, public assistance, domestic violence, and SSI/SSD benefits.

Approximately 33,600 individuals have come to New York because their own countries are experiencing a humanitarian crisis such as violent conflict, environmental disaster, or epidemic, and who have been designated with Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The Trump Administration is aggressively moving to end TPS, and has already announced the end of the program for citizens of 7 countries.

TPS holders are authorized to work, and many have employer-sponsored insurance. TPS holders are “lawfully present” and may enroll in qualified health plans through New York State of Health, if they meet eligibility criteria. Low-income TPS holders are eligible for the Essential Plan if they meet the income guidelines, because of the New York’s commitment to covering immigrant communities excluded from federal Medicaid. If TPS is terminated, New Yorkers with TPS currently stand to lose all of these health benefits.

The consequences of losing health coverage cannot be overstated. People without coverage are more likely to delay or avoid seeking preventive care for serious and chronic health conditions, and are at higher risk of incurring medical debt or bankruptcy. Gaps in coverage lead to cost inefficiencies and waste. Individuals and families without access to coverage experience worse health and shorter life expectancy than those with coverage. Hospitals must provide care for which they may not be reimbursed, and which patients may not be able to afford on their own.

Federal policies which strip health coverage from New Yorkers with TPS are contrary to New York policy and to the health of our state and our communities. Bills A. 10607-A/S. 7569-A ensure that TPS holders are eligible for Medicaid even after their TPS is terminated. While these bills do not protect all existing coverage options for TPS holders, they represent an important step in demonstrating New York’s commitment to maintain existing immigrant health coverage options.

Empire Justice Center supports the passage of this bill.

**For more information:**

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