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Alex Hernandez: All right, yeah, now it's recording. So yeah, I'm writing an article about TPS, about how earlier this month the Trump administration decided to basically end the program, I've gotten a lot of policy stuff regarding it, but I was hoping to get someone's personal experience. Not only how the program has helped them overall, but then also with this new change that the Trump administration is trying to do is impacting their day to day life, the uncertainty now of what's gonna happen with it.

Yanira Arias: Yes. Hello, can you hear me?

Alex Hernandez: Yeah, Yeah, I can hear you.

Yanira Arias: Okay. Let me know, but I am walking as I am speaking.

Alex Hernandez: Okay, yeah, of course, no worries.

Yanira Arias: Yes, definitely this is a change after two decades that nobody at the TPS holder was expecting. And it's changing our lives in a way that is not just inhumane, that is cruel, but also unfair. We continue to hear from diplomats, from information that is coming out of a lawsuit, that is there was indeed knowledge[inaudible 00:01:27] security, and administration that non of the countries are ready to receive more than 7,000 ticket holders.

Alex Hernandez: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- mm-hmm (affirmative)- And I know like when you were in El Salvador you were a journalist as well, and that kind of put you in a situation too where after doing your job essentially you had to leave the country, correct?

Yanira Arias: I did. I was working in San Salvador, which is the capital, and my job was in a very eccentric and public area, i needed to commute in a couple of buses, and also to walk to make it to the office. For many, many years I walked, and it felt safe and free walking from [inaudible 00:02:31] college. That was about seven miles walk that I used to do because I love walking, but I would say that from 1997, 1999 things started getting pretty bad in El Salvador and there was a time when I got this job [inaudible 00:02:53], so there was an incidence where it was escalating, being a victim of a robbery on a bus or robbery while walking to work from the bus station or walking to work at the office. And from that to being harassed in the ... by random men, I never expected.

Alex Hernandez: I'm so sorry to hear that. When you were granted [inaudible 00:03:27] in 2001, how did that make you feel? Knowing that you were able to then, have that status [inaudible 00:03:33] in the United States, away from there. What was the feeling when you found out about that?

Yanira Arias: It was a sense of relief because when I migrated from El Salvador that was in 2003, I had a few savings, and also I sold some of my property in order to have a little bit of money to survive for a while, and then two earthquakes struck the El Salvador destroying most of the 60% of the parts of the country.

Yanira Arias: In that unfortunate event, it was an opportunity for many TPS, many Salvadorians that we work with were residing already in the United States.

Yanira Arias: So it was a sense of relief because I was granted the protection, I learnt that, by being granted with the protection I would be provided with an identification, a Salvadorian identification, a social security number, and also a work permit. Which gave me a lot of peace of mind because to have much of the resources to support my family, after knowing that the level of devastation in the El Salvador, but also to have resources to pay bills, here while residing in the US, and also at the end of the day, there's that income [inaudible 00:05:07] in providing mostly contributing to the US economy, and not just spending, but also by submitting my taxes every year.

Yanira Arias: So, it was a blessing, it continued to be operational until now, regardless of the decision I continue to remain hopeful that by September the 19, to find a solution for myself and for everyone that is fighting for a permanent residency.

Alex Hernandez: And that's actually one thing that I wanted to ask you too about is, since this administration has been in power, you have the travel ban for muslim people. There was the increase[inaudible 00:05:56] regarding the undocumented people. There was the darker thing that he basically decided to resend the non-resend.

Alex Hernandez: It seems like this administration just rejects any idea that it bears humanitarian responsibility towards people that come to the US for a better life. Right?

Alex Hernandez: What do you think about that because it's a very stuckcontress, to previous administrations, that specifically with TPS, they just kept on renewing it because they knew that people had planted roots here, with TPS. And it just made more sense for those previous administrations to just renew it, because there was this idea of humanitarianism for the US. Right?

Alex Hernandez: But, with this Trump administration, such a stuck reversal of that. What are your thoughts on that? Are you experienced with that?

Yanira Arias: My thought on this is, it doesn't make sense. To the season or person in the TPS is based in a report that, the state employment should elaborate based on a local data, from the countries designated by ... with TPS, and also based in many indicators, so when that the country is not ready.

Yanira Arias: We just learn by the ambassadors off[inaudible 00:07:24], the Salvadorians in Haiti, recommended the administration not to cancel because non of the

countries were ready. So now that I've listened indeed, is a ... now that I've learned that it's conforming, and that it's elevating, the goals, the pleas that we've made to the administration not to cancel TPS, and that's very upsetting, it's discouraging to know that the president continues to appeal to a base that is very [inaudible 00:07:59] that is very weak, it's no longer available. It's becoming part of a policy, that the only goal is to create fear, to separate families, and to continue to revolutionize in different communities such as the gear soldiers.

Alex Hernandez: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Worst case scenario. And I really hope this doesn't happen, but, if you're forced to go back to El Salvador, because you've been in the US and you've ... like many other TPS people with that status has set roots here, have your life here, what would be ... how could you even concede of then going back to El Salvador to like go back? Does that make sense what I'm asking? Like what ...[inaudible 00:08:49] yes sorry.

Yanira Arias: It totally makes sense, I'm 46 years old. I've been here for 18 years. I have, what is ... i have given the United States 18 years of labor.

Alex Hernandez: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Yanira Arias: 18 years of contribution via my taxes. The social security, I haven't contributed that amount in my country, if I am forced to return, I won't have anything from the social security administration in my country, that allows me to retire with dignity.

Yanira Arias: Or if it means to ... for integrate, when in our country it's, along with Honduras, we're facing a high level of violence, and criminal activity. I don't see hope, returning to a country where I'm gonna become a foreigner. A stranger in my own country.

Alex Hernandez: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Yanira Arias: And I don't see hope in a country that is not even providing the necessary opportunities for the communities residing right now in El Salvador.

Yanira Arias: And in terms of jobs, at this age, I'm sure I'm not gonna be able to find a job that is gonna allow me to continue to provide not just for myself, but for my elderly parents.

Alex Hernandez: Yeah. Now that's the main thing too that I've seen with some of the other people I've spoken to, where ... in addition to planting roots here, just they have built careers here, they're near the end of their careers. And it's like you're asking me to restart when I'm close to the end of my working life, in a new country, where, like you said, "I'll be a foreigner in a country where I came from."

Alex Hernandez: It's very unreasonable. What the Trump administration is asking of people.

Yanira Arias: That's correct. Since I had this position of a campaign manager, I had the chance to speak with a lot of TPS holders around the country, and the many people I have met, they are close to the age of retirement.

Yanira Arias: I am one of the ... part of the youngest generations. 40s and mid 40s. But we do have TPS holders that are 60s and over 60s. And those are also people that are facing a lot of uncertainties, that are perhaps right now in need of a dignified retirement. That they have as well worked for many years and give back to the United States and also being able to provide for themselves and their families.

Alex Hernandez: Yeah. That's really just distressing. Just to hear these stories and see what the administration has been doing with this. I think that's all I needed.

Alex Hernandez: Is there anything you wanted to add that I didn't ask?

Yanira Arias: Although I don't have a ... I don't need the profile of having children, I do know about many families with US citizen children, that we hope to connect you with some of those families, that you can hear their stories.

Alex Hernandez: Yeah. That'd be great.

Yanira Arias: That we are aware that we're speaking of asking US citizen children, to abandonment in their country. To a country they don't know, and if they are in school age, a country that doesn't have an education system with the same quality in the United States.

Alex Hernandez: It's kinda like robbing those children of the opportunities that like being a US citizen here grants them.

Yanira Arias: Like every American kid, they deserve access to care, pursue their dreams to finish school, and to dream big. Just like any other American kid.

Yanira Arias: So does he require that we are ... it's out of, it's beyond believe that this decision is not even considered the impact to US citizen children and spouses.

Alex Hernandez: It's the ... I've been covering the Trump administration's immigration substance. Like the travel ban last year, and it's exhausting emotionally to hear the stuff they've been doing to people with these policies, and these families that've been impacted. This is horrific. Thank you so much for sharing your story with me. I really appreciate it.

Yanira Arias: Thank you very much, And as soon as I hang up with you, I'm gonna text a couple of the volunteers, that we know that are ... they signed up for telling their stories, and I will let them know that you're available tomorrow, for evening purpose,

Alex Hernandez: Yeah. I'll be available tomorrow and Friday.

Yanira Arias: Okay. And what's the best time for you?

Alex Hernandez: Anytime. I'm extremely flexible.

Yanira Arias: Okay.

Alex Hernandez: Yeah. And ...

Yanira Arias: Some of them, are in the Eastern where the East coast, or it's gonna be Eastern time, and a few of them are available working hours. Like five or six. I don't know if that's a time that works for you, I will make sure that I let them know that we should take a back-check of your interest on working on a piece, and see if they can make themselves available before that time.

Alex Hernandez: Oh yeah, that'll be great.

Yanira Arias: Otherwise I will work with all those that can make time to be, other than mid day or very early in the morning.

Alex Hernandez: That'll be perfect. And like I said, I'm extremely flexible and I can accommodate their schedules regardless of time zone.

Yanira Arias: Great. Thank you very much.

Alex Hernandez: No. Thank you. Have a great rest of your day.

Yanira Arias: Thank you . You too.

Alex Hernandez: Bye.

Yanira Arias: Bye.