

**Testimony of Yleana Roman, Health Justice & Immigration Staff Attorney
On behalf of New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
to the New York City Council's Committee on Immigration**

Good afternoon, my name is Yleana Roman, and I am the Health Justice & Immigration Staff Attorney¹ at the New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. Thank you to Chairperson Menchaca and the Committee members for having this oversight hearing.

NYLPI urges the council to support healthcare coverage for at-risk TPS holders who may lose their immigration status. For the population of immigrants we serve, those with serious health conditions, losing healthcare coverage would have devastating consequences. It would mean clients who currently have state funded Medicaid could be unable to obtain the life-saving surgeries or transplants they need because they would not have the necessary health insurance to cover their procedures. The City and State need to protect these New Yorkers and guarantee healthcare coverage for them in the future.

I. New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

For the past 40 years, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) has been a leading civil rights and legal services advocate for New Yorkers marginalized by race, poverty, disability, and immigration status. Through our community lawyering model, we bridge the gap between traditional civil legal services and civil rights, building strength and capacity for both individual solutions and long-term impact. Our work integrates the power of individual legal services, impact litigation, and comprehensive organizing and policy campaigns. Guided by the priorities of our communities, we strive to create equal access to healthcare, achieve equality of opportunity and self-determination for people with disabilities, ensure immigrant opportunity, strengthen local nonprofits, and secure environmental justice for low-income communities of color.

Our staff of 32 includes lawyers, community organizers, social workers, legal advocates, development professionals, and administrators.

¹ Admitted in New Jersey.

In the past five years alone, NYLPI advocates have represented thousands of individuals and won campaigns improving the lives of millions of New Yorkers. Our work with community partners has led to landmark victories including deinstitutionalization for people with mental illness; access to medical care and government services for those with limited English proficiency; increased physical accessibility of New York City public hospitals for people with disabilities; cleanup of toxins in public schools; and equitable distribution of environmental burdens.

In addition, NYLPI's Pro Bono Clearinghouse provides critical services to strengthen non-profits throughout every community in New York City. Drawing on volunteer lawyers from New York's most prestigious law firms, we help nonprofits and community groups thrive by providing free legal services that help organizations overcome legal obstacles, build capacity, and develop more effective programs. Through educational workshops, trainings for nonprofit leaders, individual counseling and a series of publications, the Clearinghouse is at the forefront of helping nonprofits maximize their impact on communities in each of your Districts.

II. NYLPI's Health Justice Program's UndocuCare Program & TPS applicants who benefit from healthcare coverage.

NYLPI's Health Justice Program brings a racial justice and immigrant rights focus to healthcare advocacy in New York City and State. NYLPI is privileged to be part of the City Council's immigrant health initiative and we thank you for that support. Through this funding the Council supports our UndocuCare program. As part of the program, we have been able to train and give presentations on immigrant access to healthcare to hundreds of community-based organizations, health care providers, and legal services providers. We continue to provide comprehensive screenings, and representation to individuals, particularly those who are in health emergencies. NYLPI has had the flexibility to adjust and tailor the program according to the needs of the community and to be responsive in these changing times.

We have clients in our UndocuCare program who have applied for Temporary Protected Status and are currently TPS holders. As you know, the Trump Administration aims to eliminate TPS for seven out of nine countries. These folks have lived in the United States for several years and some for decades. Ending their TPS status not only uproots them from their families, homes, jobs and communities, it would also mean potentially ending their healthcare coverage.

For our clients, this would mean the difference between treating end stage renal disease with dialysis or with a kidney transplant. Dialysis is covered by emergency Medicaid and means that the client must spend several hours, multiple days connected to a machine to survive. Dialysis will not cure their disease and it will be permanent.

Whereas a kidney transplant, which is covered by state funded Medicaid, would fix the disease and allow our clients to leave healthy, productive lives.

- III. Coverage 4 All Campaign seeks to protect TPS holders & both the City and State of New York should support an Essential Plan for all New Yorkers.

NYLPI is a part of Coverage 4 All, a campaign of HealthCare for All New York (HCFANY). Coverage 4 All demands state action to create an Essential Plan for all New Yorkers up to 200% of the federal poverty level, regardless of immigration status, with particular urgency for immigrants who will be losing their Temporary Protected Status (TPS). New York City should affirmatively step forward in supporting the Coverage 4 All campaign and should urge the State to act on behalf of all New Yorkers and to protect TPS holders.

Furthermore, should the state not choose to continue coverage for former TPS recipients we encourage the City to step in and provide comparable coverage that will maintain the specialist care these individuals currently receive and require. If both the State and City fail to provide this needed coverage, many TPS holders could be at risk.

IV. Conclusion

Ultimately, it is up to the City and State to step in and advocate for TPS applicants since the current federal administration is actively aiming to harm these individuals. Thank you for your consideration today. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council to improve immigrant New Yorkers access to healthcare. Please feel free to contact me at (212) 244-4664 or yroman@nylpi.org for further information or discussion.

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[NYLPI brings a racial justice and immigrant rights focus to health care advocacy in New York City and State. We work to: (1) challenge health disparities; (2) eliminate racial and ethnic discrimination and systemic and institutional barriers that limit universal access to health care; (3) promote immigrant and language access to health care; and (4) address the social determinants of health so that all New Yorkers can live a healthy life.]