



Statement on Deferred Enforced Departure (DED)

Saint Paul MN – On 4/16/2018 President Trump “issued a memorandum directing Secretary Nielsen to begin a 12-month DED wind-down period and to provide for continued work authorization throughout the wind-down period. This 12-month transitional period and termination of DED allows affected individuals to arrange for their departure from the United States, or seek an alternative immigration status in the United States, if eligible, before DED ends on March 31, 2019. ” President Trump’s memorandum prevented the DED program from ending on March 31st of this year, however typical DED extensions have been 18 months or longer. While we congratulate the vital Liberian American community for the extension, this decision unless addressed by the President and/or Congress, will lead to thousands of Liberian Americans being removed from a country they have known for over 25+ years and in the process will destroy thousands of families and communities.

DED, Deferred Enforced Departure, refers to a Temporary Protected Status created solely for the Liberian community. Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is an immigration designation granted to immigrants in the United States who are unable to return to their countries of origin because of ongoing armed conflict, an environmental disaster, an epidemic, or any other extraordinary and temporary conditions. Close to 61,000 (14%) of TPS holders are from Haiti, Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia. DED is similar to TPS, but only applies to Liberians.

In 1989 Liberia experienced a devastating civil war that lasted over 7 years, claimed over 250,000 lives and displaced millions. Liberia, is still recovering from that civil war, and after the 2014 Ebola crisis still faces serious challenges, especially in creating a healthcare infrastructure able to bear an influx of thousands of refugees. DED was created to address this displacement. Minnesota, in accordance with our values “welcomed Liberian refugees with open arms” in the early 90s. Because of this, Minnesota is now home to one of the largest African and black immigrant populations in the United States. These new Minnesotans are hardworking contributors to the economy and culture of Minnesota. They work in the healthcare industry, own homes, have children in our schools, patronize our restaurants and create art and music that enriches Minnesota.

A study by Dr. Bruce Corrie (Concordia University) estimates that if only 300 Liberians, who work in the Healthcare industry, were to be deported in masse, Minnesota should expect a loss in earnings of about \$300 million. In addition, those under the protection of DED have become integral to the fabric of our state.

It is because of this history and the contributions of our Liberian American community that The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage supports Governor Dayton’s letter to President Trump, which calls for not just an extension of DED but creation of a permanent path to citizenship for the Liberian American community and other critical recipients of TPS as well. That same principal must also be extended to DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) on behalf of Dreamers, where not only extension of DACA is appropriate but a permanent pathway to citizenship is also required. We thank Governor Dayton for his support on this issue.

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage calls on the Minnesota Federal Delegation to find a bipartisan solution for TPS, DED, and DACA. We also call on the President to work with Congress to craft that bi-partisan solution, which will ultimately benefit all Americans. This is common sense, this will help our economy, and most importantly it is the right thing to do for our families, friends, co-workers, and our entire State.

The Minnesota Legislature empowered the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage to ensure that people of African heritage fully and effectively participate in and equitably benefit from the political, social, and economic resources, policies and procedures of the State of Minnesota. Generally, the Council is charged with the responsibility of:

- Advising the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting People of African Heritage;
- Advising the Governor and the Legislature on statutes, rules and revisions to programs to ensure that Black people have access to benefits and services provided to people in Minnesota;
- Serving as a liaison to the federal government, local government units and private organizations on matters relating to People of African Heritage in Minnesota;
- Implementing programs designed to solve problems of People of African Heritage when authorized by statute, rule or order; and
- Publicizing the accomplishments of People of African Heritage and their contributions to the state.