

## Legislators Urge Extension of Work Authorizations

Article By:

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On the same day that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [recapitulated its usual policies and procedures for dealing with delays in processing extensions and changes of status due to COVID-19](#), 100 Democrats in the House of Representatives joined the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to urge the Trump Administration to automatically extend work authorization for all immigrants with Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) that expire soon. This would include DACA and TPS (Temporary Protected Status) beneficiaries, as well as others with EADs, such as those in L-2, H-4 and F-1 OPT/STEM OPT statuses.

The Congressmen noted that this [would help in the country's economic recovery](#) and help those under “stay at home” orders who “cannot leave their homes to collect supporting documents, print and prepare, and mail their applications.”

DHS [already grants 180-day automatic extensions of work authorization](#) for individuals in certain categories who timely file extensions. The Agency also [routinely grants automatic extensions to EADs when TPS is extended](#) in recognition of the fact that EADs could not be processed quickly enough to avoid gaps in employment authorization. Moreover, recognizing that the closing of Application Support Centers (ASCs) meant those applying for extensions of EADs could not process the necessary biometrics, [USCIS recently announced](#) it would continue processing EAD renewals with the applicants previously submitted biometrics. In the COVID-19 crisis, Congress is asking DHS to take one more step and grant automatic extensions because the usual filing timelines may be impossible to meet.

Many of those seeking extensions are [DACA](#) and [TPS](#) beneficiaries who work in healthcare or food services. They are doctors, nurses, EMTs, physician assistants, and food production and food delivery workers who are all essential, especially during this pandemic. The legislators said the focus should be on making sure that they can work and that there are no gaps in their employment authorization. DHS must balance this against the concern for improving the “employment opportunities of U.S. workers.”

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