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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To designate Lebanon under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit nationals of Lebanon to be eligible for temporary protected status under such section, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. TLAIB introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

To designate Lebanon under section 244 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit nationals of Lebanon to be eligible for temporary protected status under such section, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Lebanon TPS Act of
5 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) On August 4th, 2020, one of the most pow-
2 erful explosions ever to impact an urban population
3 ripped through the Lebanese capital of Beirut. The
4 blast—linked to 2,750 metric tons of ammonium ni-
5 trate stored in a warehouse— killed at least 220
6 people, wounded approximately 7,000, left an esti-
7 mated 300,000 people homeless, and caused approxi-
8 mately \$15,000,000,000 in property damage.

9 (2) The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a
10 heavy toll on Lebanon, which has recorded over
11 628,000 cases and 8,400 deaths since the pandemic
12 began. Lebanon’s public health system, already
13 weakened by the Beirut disaster and political up-
14 heaval, has struggled to cope in the face of the pan-
15 demic.

16 (3) While progress has been made towards a re-
17 turn to political normalcy, Lebanon lacked a fully
18 formed government for much of the COVID-19 pan-
19 demic and the political establishment remains highly
20 polarized and divided.

21 (4) Lebanon has been experiencing one of the
22 worst economic crises in its history at the same time
23 as the COVID-19 pandemic, Beirut Port explosion,
24 and political crisis.

1 (5) According to the United Nations, up to 78
2 percent of the Lebanese population (3,000,000 peo-
3 ple) were living in poverty as of March 2021.

4 (6) Per the United Nations, 36 percent of the
5 Lebanese population (1,380,000 people) are experi-
6 encing extreme poverty.

7 (7) Since October 2019, the Lebanese pound
8 has lost 90 percent of its value, resulting in a year-
9 on-year inflation rate of more than 120 percent from
10 May 2020 to May 2021.

11 (8) Food prices have skyrocketed, increasing
12 400 percent in 2020 alone.

13 (9) In July 2021, the United Nations Chil-
14 dren's Fund (UNICEF) warned that Lebanon's
15 water system is on the verge of collapse, with more
16 than 70 percent of the country facing critical water
17 shortages. In January 2019, 1,000 Lebanese pounds
18 bought 4 liters of water. By August 2021, it only
19 bought half a liter.

20 (10) Dire fuel shortages plague Lebanon, lead-
21 ing the American University of Beirut Medical Cen-
22 ter, Beirut's top hospital and one of the leading
23 medical centers in the region, to issue a warning in
24 August 2021 that hundreds of patients would die if

1 they failed to secure enough fuel to keep their gen-
2 erators running.

3 (11) The combined crises have strained many of
4 Lebanon's public institutions to the breaking point,
5 including the Lebanese Army, whose budget and sol-
6 diers' salaries have been devastated by the devalu-
7 ation of the Lebanese Pound.

8 (12) On October 14, 2021, gunmen fired on a
9 crowd of protestors gathered near the Beirut Justice
10 Palace sparking heavy armed clashes in nearby
11 neighborhoods. The ensuing fighting killed at least
12 seven individuals and wounded more than 30 others.
13 As of October 28, 2021, 68 people have been
14 charged with murder, attempted murder, stirring
15 sectarian strife, possession of illicit war weapons,
16 and destroying private and public property.

17 (13) Tensions remain extremely high as the in-
18 vestigation into the clashes is still ongoing leading to
19 fears of further violence and instability.

20 (14) Numerous residents of Beirut living in the
21 vicinity of the clashes have been quoted by domestic
22 and international media comparing the October 14th
23 clashes and ongoing tensions to the devastating
24 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war, reflecting well-found-

1 ed fears of the potential for a return to significant
2 sectarian violence.

3 (15) The United States has long stood with the
4 Lebanese people in times of need and standing with
5 them now is both morally right and in line with our
6 national interests.

7 (16) President Biden's pledge of an additional
8 \$98,000,000 in aid to Lebanon on the first anniver-
9 sary of the Beirut Port explosion was a good first
10 step in supporting the Lebanese people, and desig-
11 nating Lebanon for Temporary Protected Status
12 (TPS) is the logical next step given the cir-
13 cumstances.

14 (17) Lebanon needs significant continued inter-
15 national support to prevent the worsening of its eco-
16 nomic, social, political, and public health crises and
17 to rebuild from this period of extraordinary difficulty
18 for the Lebanese people.

19 (18) A country is designated for TPS when it
20 is determined by the United States Government that
21 it is unsafe for its citizens to return to due to "ongo-
22 ing armed conflict", "environmental disaster", or
23 "extraordinary and temporary conditions in the for-
24 eign state that prevent aliens who are nationals of
25 the state from returning to the state in safety".

1 (19) The combined crises facing Lebanon
2 amount to extraordinary and temporary conditions
3 that prevent Lebanese nationals from safely return-
4 ing to Lebanon. Any returned individual would have
5 to contend without access to clean water, adequate
6 healthcare, and affordable basic necessities – all in
7 the face of the very real threat of significant political
8 violence. After years of uncertainty, these individuals
9 deserve stability and temporary relief in the United
10 States.

11 **SEC. 3. DESIGNATION FOR PURPOSES OF GRANTING TEM-**
12 **PORARY PROTECTED STATUS.**

13 (a) DESIGNATION.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of section 244
15 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
16 1254a), Lebanon shall be treated as if it had been
17 designated under subsection (b)(1)(A) of that sec-
18 tion, subject to the provisions of this section.

19 (2) PERIOD OF DESIGNATION.—The initial pe-
20 riod of the designation referred to in paragraph (1)
21 shall be for the 18-month period beginning on the
22 date of the enactment of this Act.

23 (b) ALIENS ELIGIBLE.—As a result of the designa-
24 tion made under subsection (a), an alien who is a national
25 of Lebanon is deemed to satisfy the requirements under

1 paragraph (1) of section 244(c) of the Immigration and
2 Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)), subject to paragraph
3 (3) of such section, if the alien—

4 (1) has been continuously physically present in
5 the United States since the date of the enactment of
6 this Act;

7 (2) is admissible as an immigrant, except as
8 otherwise provided in paragraph (2)(A) of such sec-
9 tion, and is not ineligible for temporary protected
10 status under paragraph (2)(B) of such section; and

11 (3) registers for temporary protected status in
12 a manner established by the Secretary of Homeland
13 Security.

14 (c) CONSENT TO TRAVEL ABROAD.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland
16 Security shall give prior consent to travel abroad, in
17 accordance with section 244(f)(3) of the Immigra-
18 tion and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a(f)(3)), to
19 an alien who is granted temporary protected status
20 pursuant to the designation made under subsection
21 (a) if the alien establishes to the satisfaction of the
22 Secretary of Homeland Security that emergency and
23 extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the
24 alien require the alien to depart for a brief, tem-
25 porary trip abroad.

1 (2) TREATMENT UPON RETURN.—An alien re-
2 turning to the United States in accordance with an
3 authorization described in paragraph (1) shall be
4 treated as any other returning alien provided tem-
5 porary protected status under section 244 of the Im-
6 migration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a).

7 **SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.**

8 The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of
9 complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010,
10 shall be determined by reference to the latest statement
11 titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this
12 Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record
13 by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, pro-
14 vided that such statement has been submitted prior to the
15 vote on passage.