



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

January 8, 2018

**Contact:**

Allison Lee, Vice President External Affairs

Email: [alee@bettzedek.org](mailto:alee@bettzedek.org)

Direct: 323-549-5813, Cell 310-991-0373

## **Bet Tzedek Opens Its Doors to TPS Families Faced with Difficult Decisions**

On Jan. 8, 2018, Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen announced her decision to terminate the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for El Salvador, stripping current beneficiaries of legal status and exposing them to possible deportation. The Los Angeles region is home to more than 30,400 TPS recipients from El Salvador – the second highest concentration in the United States. Due to extreme gang violence in El Salvador, Salvadoran parents are now faced with the difficult decision of whether to take their U.S. citizen children back with them to El Salvador and risk putting them in harm's way or leave them in the US, separating families.

As part of its work through [The Los Angeles Justice Fund](#), Bet Tzedek will conduct community outreach, provide legal representation and Know Your Rights sessions for TPS recipients and their families seeking counsel on how best to plan for the future.

Bet Tzedek urges these families to consider:

- **Power of attorney cannot be used to transfer custody rights.** It can only be used to permit certain specific acts such as placing a child on a flight to reunify with a parent in a home country after removal from the U.S.
- **Caregiver Affidavits**, a substantial alternative to power of attorney, allow the caregiver to enroll the child in school and authorize certain types of medical treatment, without requiring the parent to relinquish custody.
- For parents that do want to transfer rights, **probate guardianship is another option.**
- Bet Tzedek Family Preparedness Toolkits in English and Spanish [are available for download on the Bet Tzedek website.](#)

Bet Tzedek has the following legal experts available to discuss options for TPS parents:

- **Erikson Albrecht.** Bet Tzedek Directing Attorney. Erikson has over 10 years of experience handling both uncontested and contested guardianship matters and experience counseling caregivers with their rights.
- **Liz Gonzalez,** Bet Tzedek Kinship Care Staff Attorney. A former attorney with The Immigration Center for Women and Children, Liz has experience with various forms of immigration matters,

including Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. As a member of the Kinship Care team, she represents clients with their Petitions for Appointment of Guardian.

- **Leslie Diaz**, Family Preparedness Coordinator. Leslie is responsible for working with community partners to set up and organize our Family Preparedness Workshops.

### **About Bet Tzedek's Rapid Response/Family Preparedness Program**

Bet Tzedek's Rapid Response/Family Preparedness Program was launched in February 2017 in response to revised Department of Homeland Security deportation protocols which left the parents of 250,000 U.S. citizen children residing in Los Angeles at-risk for deportation. Since that time, we have conducted over 80 Know Your Rights Trainings and Clinics, providing legal counsel and education to over 23,000 individuals. As a recipient organization of The Los Angeles Justice Fund, Bet Tzedek works with families to create caregiver affidavits and probate guardianships designed to protect children remaining in the United States, conducts know-your-rights trainings, and provides comprehensive legal services.

Bet Tzedek staff attorneys and advocates are available for interviews, Know Your Rights programs and town halls. Please contact Diego Cartagena, Vice President of Legal Programs at [dcartagena@bettzedek.org](mailto:dcartagena@bettzedek.org) or 323-549- 5839 for more information or to schedule a presentation.

For more information about Bet Tzedek, please visit [www.bettzedek.org](http://www.bettzedek.org).

###