

Franken urges reprieve from deportation for Liberians living in Minnesota

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Washington, D.C.— Minnesota Sen. Al Franken joined 12 of his colleagues to urge President Obama to extend the Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Liberians living legally in the United States.

Since 1991, Liberians who were forced from their homes because of civil war and sought refuge in the United States have been granted either Temporary Protected Status or approved DED. This protection is currently set to expire March 31, 2010.

“For the last twenty years, Minnesota has been home to one of the largest Liberian communities in the country,” said Franken. “Roughly 25,000 Liberians currently call Minnesota their home and over 1,000 of them would face deportation if we allow these protections to expire. It’s wonderful to see Liberia making progress in rebuilding their country, but the situation there continues to be fragile. Liberians who have lived in Minnesota for almost two decades should not be forced to return to a country which is still in the process of becoming stable.”

Also signing the letter to President Obama are Sens. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Amy Klobuchar (D-MM.), Arlen Specter (D-PA.), Ted Kaufman (D-DE), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH).