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EL RESCATE HUMAN RIGHTS DEPARTMENT
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The statement will be read by actors Edward James Olmos
in english or Esai Morales in Spanish, at the opening of the xmas
party.

Statement by U.S. Congressman Moakley to members of the Salvadoran community in Los Angeles at El Rescate's 9th Annual Christmas Party for Central American Refugee Children.

I am sorry that I could not be here with you and your children today, but wish to convey my best wishes to all of you for a very merry Christmas and a healthy and safe new year. I want you to know that there is growing awareness in this country of why so many of you Salvadorans have come to this country seeking safe-haven, and for the need to promote a negotiated solution to the war in El Salvador. In this holiday season, my prayers are with you, as together we work to restore peace to your homeland so that many of you who are now separated from home and family will this time next year be reunited with your loved ones in peace. May the Christmas message of "peace on earth" become a reality in El Salvador. I feel strongly that the United Nations mediated negotiations and the 50% cut in US military aid to El Salvador are important first steps to making a politically negotiated end to the war a reality.

The New Year will begin with the much fought for and needed recognition that the Salvadoran community here in the United States are refugees fleeing generalized violence of civil-war and thus deserve our protection. The new legislation which I am proud to have authored "Temporary Protective Status," provides protection for 18 months for those Salvadorans who entered the U.S. on or before September 19, 1990 and have remained continuously present in the U.S. since that time. It also provides work authorization, renewable every 6 months during the 18 month period for those Salvadorans who register and qualify.

The struggle to secure protective status for Salvadorans has been a long and difficult one, but the courage and commitment of your community both here and in El Salvador in their own struggle to win respect for human rights has always served to guide me and fuel my work for reforms in immigration and foreign policy.

I am pleased to tell you that TPS marks a significant first step in the U.S. government's recognition of its responsibility in reshaping our foreign policy to promote a peacefully negotiated end to the war in El Salvador. This recognition is a fitting Christmas gift for your community which has suffered so much and struggled for so long to obtain safe haven in the United States and peace with justice in El Salvador.