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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. LOFGREN (for herself and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

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

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Cameroon TPS Act of 2021”.
SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Cameroon is in the midst of four ongoing armed conflicts generally characterized by state sponsored violence, nonstate transnational terrorism, and widespread human rights violations, making safe return to Cameroon impossible.

(2) Since late 2016, the conflict between the government and armed separatists has displaced over 700,000 people in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon and resulted in thousands of civilian casualties.

(3) This conflict has also exacerbated long-standing tensions between farmers and nomadic herders over natural resources, resulting in violence and increased civilian casualties in the Northwest region of Cameroon.

(4) Cameroon’s presidential election in 2018 and local elections in 2020 exacerbated long simmering political and ethnic tensions, and each resulted in uprisings and violence.

(5) In the Far North region, Boko Haram and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) continue to terrorize communities, including by using kidnapping and child soldiers in suicide bombings of schools, mosques, and refugee camps.
(6) The civil war in the Central African Republic has also spilled over to Cameroon, with cross border militias initiating conflicts in the East region.

(7) These conflicts have led to critical shortages of essentials such as water, food, housing, and health care, leaving an estimated 4.4 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and roughly 1 million people displaced internally.

(8) In 2020, the Department of State reported that Cameroonian authorities used these conflicts as a pretext to engage in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, torture, and targeted violence against marginalized populations.

(9) Cameroonian authorities have also targeted Cameroonians who have fled to the United States. Prior to scheduled removal flights leaving the United States, government-led protests in front of the United States Embassy in Yaoundé called on the United States Government to either criminally charge or deport asylum seekers who they alleged were backers of Anglophone separatists.

(10) The United States nevertheless deported a significant number of Cameroonians, reportedly under duress, to face politically motivated detention and torture at the hands of their government.
(11) Reports also indicate that upon arrival, Cameroonian authorities confiscated identity documents and monitored activities of all deported individuals. Family members of such individuals report that their loved ones are unaccounted for and fear that they may have been redetained by security forces.

(12) Cameroonians in the United States cannot return safely to Cameroon without risking detention, torture, or displacement. After years of uncertainty, these individuals deserve stability and temporary relief in the United States.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION FOR PURPOSES OF GRANTING TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS.

(a) DESIGNATION.—

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

(2) PERIOD OF DESIGNATION.—The initial period of the designation referred to in paragraph (1) shall be for the 18-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.
(b) ALIENS ELIGIBLE.—As a result of the designation made under subsection (a), an alien who is a national of Cameroon is deemed to satisfy the requirements under paragraph (1) of section 244(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1254a(c)), subject to paragraph (3) of such section, if the alien—

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

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

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

(c) CONSENT TO TRAVEL ABROAD.—

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

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

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.
The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of
complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010,
shall be determined by reference to the latest statement
titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this
Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record
by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, pro-
vided that such statement has been submitted prior to the
vote on passage.