



June 20, 2018

The Honorable Jefferson B. Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Attorney General Sessions and Secretary Nielsen:

We write to demand you immediately reverse course on the Administration's inhumane decision to separate children from their parents at the border. This policy has traumatized families who are seeking asylum and fleeing violence. The decision to separate children from their parents at the border is cruel, unnecessary, and goes against the fundamental values of America. You should end this policy without delay.

We urge the reversal of any measure that would make it harder for parents or relatives to sponsor children in custody, or for children and their parents to reunite. This "zero tolerance" policy adds to the backlog of deportation cases and legal challenges in federal courts, places thousands of immigrants in detention facilities and shelters, endangers the lives of more children, and instills fear in people seeking safety in our country.

The administration's well-documented decision to use separation as a deterrent is callous and demonstrates its desire to control immigration without concern for the care and protection of migrant children, victims of human trafficking and violence as they escape harsh and dangerous circumstances and seek asylum in the United States. We are deeply concerned that this policy will lead to long-term adverse childhood experiences and trauma. It is, at its core, un-American.

Best practices and ample evidence in child welfare promote keeping children and their parents together. Everyone from the American Academy of Pediatrics, United Methodist Church, Orthodox Union and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops agree that unnecessarily separating children from their parents further exacerbates the situation. We join these countless organizations and leaders on both sides of the aisle from across this country in denouncing these actions, including former First Lady Laura Bush who powerfully stated "this zero-tolerance policy is cruel. It is immoral."

We urge you to rescind this unethical and merciless policy; it is beneath this country and its values.

Sincerely,

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