

June 8, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We, the undersigned national, state, and local organizations write to urge you to end the systematic and cruel separation of families apprehended at the U.S. border. Increased family separation at the border comes at a time when immigration enforcement has already torn apart families across the country, at places of worship, schools, and workplaces. Mothers and fathers who have lived in the U.S. for decades are being forced to decide whether they should leave their American children behind in the care of others for a secure and brighter future, or take them with them to a country now foreign to them. Children and young people are having to grow up fast as their mothers and fathers are forcibly taken away by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

These tactics are devastating American communities. Most recently, however, this administration's policies are resulting in another needless, self-made crisis: that of hundreds of parents and children – many of whom are seeking asylum in this country – torn apart thanks to the Justice Department's and Department of Homeland Security's recent "zero tolerance" policy, which calls for the prosecution of all who cross our southwest border. This policy traumatizes families, undermines our country's once honored commitment to ensuring fairness and protection for those fleeing persecution, and only exacerbates the burdens already overwhelming our immigration system. We now know that [more than 700 children have been separated from their families](#) between October 2017 and April 2018, and that nearly that many – [638 adults traveling with 658 children](#) – have been torn apart *in just two weeks* since the new policy took effect in early May. These families came to United States seeking safety and a better life only to be subjected to callous cruelty.

To be clear, those families seeking protection in the United States are not exploiting loopholes in U.S. law. The right to seek asylum here is enshrined in domestic and international law, and does not guarantee any one family protection. Indeed, it has been extensively documented that those seeking protection face enormous obstacles to making a claim or doing so, especially from immigration detention. These challenges are unspeakably exacerbated when combined with the trauma of separation from one's parent or one's child. Family separation also comes at an enormous cost to the U.S. taxpayer, who foots the bill for the separate detention of parents and children, the cost of criminal prosecution, and the costs of what are now two or more separate immigration court cases rather than a single case for one family.

The American Academy of Pediatrics [has condemned these policies](#), saying that "highly stressful experiences, like family separation, can cause irreparable harm, disrupting a child's brain architecture and affecting his or her short- and long-term health. This type of prolonged exposure to serious stress – known as toxic stress – can carry lifelong consequences for children."

We are appalled that these policies are being implemented at the same time that ICE is indiscriminately targeting undocumented immigrants and doubling down on home and workplace raids. Immigrant parents and caregivers who have lived in U.S. for decades are being forcibly taken away, leaving a trail of countless American children without their mothers and fathers. Together with your administration's decision to strip over a million people of either Temporary Protected Status or DACA, these actions are forcing countless parents to leave behind their families, their businesses, their communities, and the country they proudly call home.

Tearing apart families does nothing to make us safer or stronger, and separating children from their parents betrays our deeply held American values.

We demand that you end these callous and cruel policies against immigrants and their families immediately.

Sincerely,

18MillionRising.org

ACLU

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

American Federation of Teachers

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Anti-Defamation League

Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC

Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence

ATNJ Atlantic County

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Bend the Arc Jewish Action

BiNet USA

Bisexual Resource Center

Brooklyn For Peace

Center for Community Change Action

Center for Law and Social Policy

Center for Popular Democracy

Center for Victims of Torture

Children's Defense Fund - Texas

Church World Service

Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles

Clearinghouse on Women's Issues

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights

Coalition on Human Needs

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Equal Justice Society
Equality California
Fair Immigration Reform Movement
Faith in Action
Faith in Public Life
Family Equality Council
Farmworker Justice
Feminist Majority
First Focus
FL Immigrant Coalition
Futures Without Violence
HIAS
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights Advocates
Human Rights Campaign
Impact Fund
Indivisible Nation BK
International Association of Women in Radio and TV - USA
International Rescue Committee
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Juvenile Law Center
Latin America Working Group
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Lawyers for Good Government
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of Women Voters of the United States
Make The Road Nevada
MAS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
MAS IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER
MomsRising
Muslim Public Affairs Council
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Youth Law
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Disability Rights Network
National Domestic Workers Alliance/We Belong Together
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project

National Health Law Program
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
North Carolina Justice Center
Oxfam America
PAVES (Polysexual Alliance for Visibility, Education, and Support)
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Poverty Elimination and Community Education (PEACE) Foundation and NGO Committee on Migration
SEIU
South Asian Network
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Southern Poverty Law Center
The Arc of the United States
The Episcopal Church
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
UnidosUS (Formerly the National Council of La Raza)
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
United We Dream
Voices for Progress
Wallingford Indivisible
Win Without War
Women's Refugee Commission
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
World Without Genocide at Mitchell Hamline School of Law
YWCA Greater Austin
YWCA USA