



**One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515**

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
441 D Street SW
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul:

Over Father's Day weekend, many of us visited facilities along our Nation's southern border that are holding children separated from their parents due to the Trump Administration's so-called "zero-tolerance policy." We write to urge you and our Republican colleagues on the Committee on Homeland Security to join with us in calling on the President to put an immediate end to his inhumane and ineffective policy.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, from May 5 to June 9, 2018 alone, the Trump Administration separated 2,342 children and babies from their parents at the border. Estimates are that tens of thousands of children could be in Administration facilities by August. This practice harkens back to some of the darkest times in American history and runs contrary to our most fundamental values.

Yesterday, Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen defended the Administration's actions, despite the media reporting shocking images of children being held in cage-like structures and troubling audio recordings of youngsters crying and pleading for their parents. Her comments were a shameful attempt to defend an Administration policy that is, quite simply, indefensible.

Unfortunately, like the President, the Secretary also attempted to shift the blame for the Administration's actions to Congress. The American people will not be fooled. There is no law that requires children to be taken away from their parents while they seek asylum in the U.S. The President himself can put an end to separating families as quickly as he started it. Unfortunately, he has so far refused to do so. Instead, he is using these children as leverage to try to influence the ongoing immigration debate.

Meanwhile, leaders from many faiths and denominations, children's welfare organizations, the American Academy of Pediatrics, all living former First Ladies, respected national security officials, and a host of other prominent people and groups have expressed concern about the Trump Administration's policy and the harm it is causing vulnerable children. We stand with them in their

support for the children and know that to remain silent is to be complicit in the Administration's actions.

While we do not agree on every issue, our Committee prides itself on coming together on a bipartisan basis to find agreement wherever possible. Surely, we can agree that families belong together.

Again, we urge you to join us in calling on President Trump to halt immediately his Administration's practice of separating families at the border.

Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Ranking Member
House Committee on Homeland Security



SHEILA JACKSON LEE
Member
House Committee on Homeland Security



JAMES R. LANGEVIN
Member
House Committee on Homeland Security



CEDRIC L. RICHMOND
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