



Catholic
Charities
USA®

Working to Reduce Poverty in America.

March 8, 2017

The Honorable John F. Kelly
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Kelly:

I write to you today on behalf of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), expressing my strong concern for any immigration enforcement strategy that seeks to separate migrant parents from their children.

Catholic Charities USA is a national organization representing the 177 Diocesan Catholic Charities agencies and affiliated ministries operating over 2,500 sites across the United States and the US territories. We serve over 8 million vulnerable people each year. Last year Catholic Charities provided care for over 600,000 migrants. The majority were women and children.

We know that the family is the fundamental unit of society and parents have the primary responsibility for raising and educating their children. In my own experience as a clinical psychologist who has worked with many traumatized children and adults, I have seen first hand the devastating consequences of children separated from their mothers and fathers. I have visited children held in detention facilities in Latin America and in the United States. I have comforted sobbing children who were terrified that they would never see their parents again. The children coming to our border have already faced a life of violence and significant hardships in their home countries. It is precisely this trauma that they and their families have come to the United States in order to escape. It is deeply troubling that as a matter of policy we would retraumatize these children by separating them from their families.

I therefore implore you to keep children united with their families and reject immigration enforcement proposals that would divide parents from their children.

Sincerely,

Sister Donna Markham OP, PhD
President and CEO

Episcopal Liaison
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Bishop of Pittsburgh

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