

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Kelly:

As members of the Women's Working Group on Immigration Reform, a partnership between members of Congress and faith and community-based organizations, we are writing to express our serious concern and opposition to an immigration plan you recently discussed in the media. You appeared to acknowledge a Trump Administration plan to separate immigrant children from their parents when families are apprehended by US Border Patrol agents in order to deter them from coming.

Interfering with the parent-child bond is always inappropriate under normal circumstances. Interfering with that bond and separating children from their loving parents as a government tactic to enforce any government policy is inhumane and obscene. Your apparent intent to follow such a practice as a means to enforce our nation's immigration policy goes blatantly against our American values.

Immigrant families who arrive at our borders and ports of entry are often fleeing violence, torture and the real threat of death in their own home countries. They come to America to protect their children and preserve their family. They undertake the long and often dangerous journey because they know that to remain at home would likely ensure a far worse fate for them. Separating these families by segregating parents from their children serves no national security purpose and would serve only to further traumatize these already injured families and their fragile children.

A government that separates children from parents as a matter of official policy in order to deter another action, in this case undocumented immigration, goes counter to everything our country stands for and holds dear. Moreover, the courts ruled in 2015 that a blanket no-release policy in order to deter future migration is a violation of federal immigration law and regulations, as well as the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. We believe such an anti-family policy is wrongheaded and we strongly urge you to not implement such a cruel policy in any form as part of our immigration strategy.

America’s protection of the defenseless makes our nation stand out in the world. Eroding any family solely because of their immigrant status will only serve to undermine our country’s reputation and will not make America safer. It will only confirm what our opponents say of our nation and further fan the flames of hate they feel toward us.

Sincerely,

PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Member of Congress

LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of Congress

NANETTE BARRAGAN
Member of Congress

KAREN BASS
Member of Congress

JUDY CHU
Member of Congress

ROSA DELAURO
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BRENDA LAWRENCE
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GWEN MOORE
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LINDA SANCHEZ
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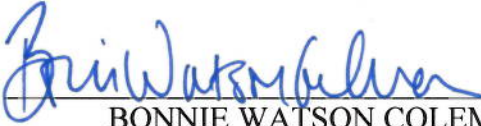
JACKIE SPEIER
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