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20 June 2018

President Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

We appreciate your willingness to follow the wishes of the American people by issuing an Executive Order ending the practice of separating children from their families along the southern border of the United States. The Statue of Liberty, one of our nation's most cherished symbols, standing in New York's harbor holds in her hand a tablet that reads "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free." The previous policy of your administration was in direct opposition to those words, so today's news of an Executive Order is welcome.

However, we are concerned that an entirely new procedure to deal with children accompanying families illegally crossing the southern border could be subject to legal challenges and result in continued trauma to children and their families. We suggest you return to the prior, humane policy that prioritized keeping families intact. The previous policy, which was followed by your two immediate predecessors kept children with their parents as they went through the immigration, asylum, or deportation process.

Many of the families arriving at the border are fleeing from life-threatening circumstances and persecution in their home country. They come to America searching for relief and asylum. Instead, they have recently been greeted with callous behavior and forced separation from their children.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights labels the practice of separating children from their families along the southern border a "serious violation" of the rights of children. The practice also clearly violates the UN Refugee Convention which states that asylum-seekers should not be penalized for entering a country illegally. The American

Psychological Association has stated that many families are suffering from a "mental health crisis" due to separation, and Catholic bishops all over the country have denounced the policy as "immoral."

We write this letter to add our voices to the voices of business, religious, and political leaders from across the country who say that separating children from their families as a matter of policy is antithetical to what America stands for and our shared American values. We encourage you and your administration to prioritize the children's mental health and safety when creating this new policy.

Respectfully,



Representative David Guttenberg



Senator Tom Begich



Representative Bryce Edgmon,  
Speaker of the House



Representative Matt Claman



Representative Harriet Anagnostis




Senator Dennis Egan



Senator Berta Gardner



Representative Neal Foster



Representative Andy Josephson



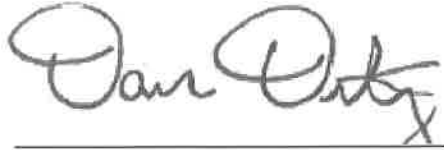
Representative Scott Kawasaki



Representative John Lincoln



Senator Donald Olson



Representative Dan Ortiz



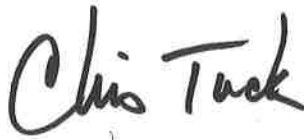
Representative Justin Parish



Representative Ivy Spohnholz



Representative Paul Seaton



Representative Chris Tuck



Representative Geran Tarr



Senator Bill Wielechowski



Representative Adam Wool



Representative Tiffany Zulkosky