



Lutheran
Services
in America

June 20, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Democratic Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of Lutheran Services in America—one of the nation’s largest nonprofit organizations serving one in 50 Americans each year—I am writing to express our opposition to the Administration’s policy of separating immigrant children from their parents at our border that was announced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions on April 6, 2018 and elucidated by Chief of Staff John Kelly in subsequent media interviews. Given the President’s refusal to discontinue this policy himself, we call on Congress to take immediate legislative action to end this policy and outlaw this practice going forward.

Further, we call on the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement to take immediate steps to restore connections between the children who are currently in custody and their family members who are awaiting processing, including regular visitation and communication.

As the national network of Lutheran social ministry organizations, we are guided by God’s call to love and serve our neighbors. In that role, we empower our member organizations, over 100 of which serve children, youth and families, in their mission to lift up the nation’s most vulnerable populations. Therefore, we are especially alarmed that the Administration’s current policies have



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resulted in more than 2,000 children being separated from their parents while their parents are being processed at our borders.

Separating children from their parents when they present themselves at our border should never be a part of American policy. As the American Academy of Pediatrics recently stated, “...family separation causes irreparable harm to children. This type of highly stressful experience can disrupt the building of children's brain architecture. Prolonged exposure to serious stress – known as toxic stress – can lead to lifelong health consequences.”

We urge Congress to immediately put into place the laws, processes and resources that will ensure the health, safety and well-being of all children and end the separation of immigrant children from their parents at our border.

Respectfully,

Charlotte Haberaecker
President and CEO