

Hispanic Affairs Project



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Open Letter,

Zero tolerance

This new immigration policy of **Zero Tolerance** being implemented is leading to drastic increases in cases of family separation. Family unity, once the cornerstone of our American immigration system, has been cast aside.

More than 650 children were separated from their parents at the U.S. border during a two week period in May, according to government records. Unnecessarily separating families is extremely detrimental to basic child welfare, costly and ineffective to the goals of deterrence and safety.

As a country we have done this all before. We separated families of slaves and we put American Indian children in schools separated from their families. We now look back on those times as immoral.

The UN office for Human Rights has condemned this practice. These separations are happening in large part due to Attorney General Jeff Session's Zero Tolerance policy. NPR reported there are at least 10,733 children in detention facilities currently.

Increasing Prosecutions and Separating Children from Their Parents Will Not Deter Families From Seeking Safety in the U.S. This policy will not cure the root causes of migration from Central America today. Factors such as community or state sanctioned violence, poverty, lack of educational opportunity, forcible gang recruitment, and domestic abuse are compelling families to take the enormous risks of migration. We are fortunate just by the geography of where we are born. Those at our border have not had this fortune.

What can we do to help separated families? Tell Congress to end Family Separation at our borders. Propose more humane solutions such as Alternatives to Detention whereby the family unit is kept intact. This in the long run costs the taxpayer less than separate confinement. Support recently arrived immigrant & migrant families in our community.

-Marny Apel, Montrose