



June 20, 2018

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

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 call on you and your administration to immediately end the 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.

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 resulted in more than 2,000 children being separated from their parents while their parents are being processed by immigration officials.

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.”



Lutheran
Services
in America

We urge the Administration and Congress to immediately put into place the laws, processes and resources that will ensure the health, safety and well-being of all immigrant children.

Respectfully,

Charlotte Haberaecker
President and CEO

CC: The Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services
The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Jeff Sessions, Attorney General