

PROTECT CHILDREN FROM HARMFUL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

Across the United States, immigration enforcement policies are placing children at risk. Actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are separating families, destabilizing communities, and exposing children to fear and **trauma** no child should endure. Policies that fracture families and undermine children's access to education, health care, and basic stability violate our shared values and threaten children's long-term well-being.

Congress has a critical role to play. Lawmakers must assert oversight of the Administration's actions, push back against harmful enforcement practices, and advance policies that put children's safety, stability, and best interests first. At a minimum, lawmakers must support the following child-centered reforms:

1. Require a “Best Interests of the Child” Standard

- The “best interests of the child” standard is foundational in U.S. child welfare law and required in all 50 states.
- Immigration decisions affecting children must include a formal process to consider their best interests especially when decisions could result in permanent family separation, deportation to dangerous conditions and long-term trauma.

2. End Child and Family Detention

- There is no safe or humane way to detain children beyond the short term.
- Invest instead in community-based alternatives that keep families together while respecting due process and human dignity.

3. Restore Sensitive Location Protections

- Support the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.
- Schools, childcare centers, hospitals, and places of worship must be safe spaces not sites of fear.
- Enforcement actions near schools undermine trust and harm children far beyond the moment of arrest.

Take Action

Please join us in writing to our Representative and Senators to demand they protect children.

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Draft Letter

Dear

I am writing as your constituent to urge you to take immediate action to protect children from the harmful impacts of immigration enforcement practices carried out by the Administration.

Across the country, immigration enforcement actions are separating children from parents and caregivers, destabilizing families, and causing lasting emotional and developmental harm. Children living in fear of detention or deportation experience anxiety, depression, and mistrust of schools, health care providers, and other essential community institutions. No child should grow up afraid that going to school or seeking medical care could result in family separation.

I urge you to demand the Administration center the best interests of children and uphold our nation's values of compassion, justice, and human dignity by calling for the following:

- **Require a “best interests of the child” standard in immigration decisions.** This standard is foundational in U.S. child welfare law and must be applied when immigration decisions could result in permanent family separation or return a child to dangerous conditions.
- **End child and family detention.** There is no safe or humane way to detain children beyond the short term. Congress should redirect funding away from detention facilities and toward community-based alternatives that keep families together while respecting due process.
- **Restore protections for sensitive locations.** Schools, child care centers, hospitals, places of worship, and other child-centered spaces must be safe zones. I urge you to support the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act and ensure these places remain free from immigration enforcement actions.

I urge you to stand up for children. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,