

Dear Member of Congress,

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our strong support for the *Humane Enforcement and Legal Protections (HELP) for Separated Children Act* (H.R. 3451) and the *Help Separated Families Act* (H.R. 3452), introduced by Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, which codify protections for children who may be separated from their parents by immigration enforcement actions in the interior. As organizations committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families, we stand united against the administration's harsh immigration enforcement agenda and the harm it is imposing on [more than a quarter of children](#) in the United States, the majority of whom are U.S. citizens. These companion bills represent a critical step toward mitigating the harm of enforcement actions on children.

There may be no greater threat to children's emotional security than the fear of being separated from a parent. Research consistently demonstrates that [family separation](#) has harmful effects on children's psychological and physical well-being. Children whose parents are [detained or deported](#) often suffer from physical and mental health difficulties, including irregular sleeping or eating habits, developmental regressions, and increased anger and withdrawal. These outcomes are most pronounced when children witness a parent's arrest and when they experience long periods of separation from their parent. Children who are left behind following separation from a parent are also at greater risk of entering the child welfare system.

The *HELP Separated Children Act* includes provisions that would help to mitigate some of the stress and instability of immigration enforcement on children by allowing parents to arrange for the care of their children prior to being taken into custody and prior to deportation; supporting continued contact between detained parents and children; and ensuring parents are able to fully participate in child welfare proceedings. The bill also seeks to minimize trauma for children who are present during enforcement actions by requiring agents to undergo training and to refrain from interrogating parents in front of children or using children as translators.

Meanwhile, the *Help Separated Families Act* includes critical provisions to address barriers that may prevent children in the child welfare system from being able to reunify with a detained or deported parent or to be placed in the care of a family member. For example, the bill prohibits immigration status alone from being a factor in placement decisions and permits certain forms of foreign identification for purposes of a background check. The bill also seeks to prevent unnecessary permanent separation by allowing child welfare agencies to delay the process for terminating parental rights in cases when a parent is detained or deported, unless certain conditions are met.

These important bills could not be timelier following the administration's [recent announcement](#) that they will be undertaking massive raids in communities around the country. Children are increasingly feeling the effects of the administration's interior immigration enforcement policies, including making every undocumented immigrant a priority for deportation and scaling back the ability of immigration officials to exercise discretion when making decisions about detaining or deporting parents of U.S. citizen children. As a result, millions of children are increasingly vulnerable to being separated from a parent or loved one.

No child should have to live in fear of losing a parent. We urge you to stand with children and families by co-sponsoring the *HELP Separated Children* and *Help Separated Families Acts*.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors
American Federation of Teachers
American Public Health Association
Appleseed Foundation
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities
Center for American Progress
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Child Labor Coalition
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund
Children's HealthWatch
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
Church World Service
Coalition on Human Needs
Conference of Presentation Sisters
CREA
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Early Opportunities
Families Belong Together
First Focus Campaign for Children
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Hispanic Federation
Immigrant and Refugee Rights Network
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigration Hub
La Ley
Latino Victory Project
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
League of Women Voters of the United States
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Main Street Alliance
Media Voices for Children
MomsRising
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Social Workers
National Consumers League
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Immigration Law Center

National Partnership for New Americans
National PTA
National WIC Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
ParentsTogether
People Demanding Action
RESULTS
School Social Work Association of America
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sisters of Mercy- Institute Justice Team
Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
UnidosUS
Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM US province
Veterans for American Ideals
We Are One, Inc.
Women's Refugee Commission
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE

State and Local Organizations

Alabama

Alabama Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

Arizona

West Valley Neighborhoods Coalition

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

California

AB 540 Ally Training Project
California Partnership
Children Now
The Children's Partnership
Coachella Valley Immigrant Dignity Coalition
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc. (CAB)
East Bay Community Law Center
First 5 Marin Children and Families Commission
Food for People, the Food Bank for Humboldt County
Ground Game LA
Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Oasis Legal Services

One Degree
Operation Access
People Organized for Westside Renewal (POWER)
PRESENTATION Sisters and ASSOCIATES
Sisters of the Presentation
South Bay People Power
We Are One, Inc.
Yemeni Alliance Committee

Colorado

Clearview Consultants
Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

Florida

Florida Health Justice Project

Illinois

Casa Esperanza
The HANA Center

Indiana

Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc.

Iowa

Crossing Borders – Dubuque
Sisters of the Presentations

Kansas

Kansas Appleseed

Massachusetts

Boston Catholic Climate Movement
Cape Cod Coalition for Safe Communities

Minnesota

Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota
Inter-faith Coalition on Immigration, MN

Nebraska

Nebraska Appleseed
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest

Nevada

Children's Advocacy Alliance (NV)

New Jersey

Advocates for Children of New Jersey

New Mexico

Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice
Catholic Charities of Southern New Mexico

New York

Arab-American Family Support Center
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC, Inc.
The Children's Agenda
Children's Aid
Children's Defense Fund - New York
Chinese-American Planning Council
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families (CHCF)
Community Health Care Association of New York State
Damayan Migrant Workers Association, Inc.
Don't Separate Families
Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees
MinKwon Center for Community Action
Sakhi for South Asian Women
South Asian Youth Action (SAYA)
University Settlement Society of New York
YWCA of Queens

North Carolina

NC Child

North Dakota

Ehrens Consulting

Ohio

Action for Children

Oregon

Children's Institute

Texas

American Gateways
Austin Asian Community Health Initiative
Beckett Law Firm, P.C.
Center for Public Policy Priorities, Texas
Children's Defense Fund – Texas
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services, Inc.
Equal Justice Center
Justice For Our Neighbors East Texas
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center

Tennessee

Black Children's Institute of Tennessee
Siloam Health

Utah

Utahns Against Hunger
Voices for Utah Children

Vermont

Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition

Washington

Asian Counseling and Referral Service
Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Washington
Asian Pacific Islander Coalition-Yakima
DCYF Equity Office
Seattle Immigrant Rights Action Group
Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP