

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

October 27, 2020

Reuniting Children and Families Separated at the U.S. Border

In May 2018, the Trump Administration enacted what they termed a "zero-tolerance" policy to prosecute all undocumented immigrants detained while trying to cross the U.S./Mexican border. This policy resulted in the painful and harmful separation of more than 2,500 children from their parents while the parents were in detention awaiting the outcome of their immigration cases. After intense public condemnation and fierce litigation, the Administration abandoned the cruel policy. However, the Administration subsequently disclosed that they had deported hundreds of parents without their children, and that the Administration was struggling to reunite the children left behind with their parents.

Additionally, the Administration later acknowledged that it had begun separating children from their parents since 2017 under a pilot program they launched prior to instituting their "zero-tolerance" policy. More than 1,000 families were separated under this pilot program. A recent report filed with the Court on October 19, 2020 pursuant to

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ongoing litigation, disclosed that 545 children separated through this pilot program remain separated from their parents in spite of the efforts of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other pro-bono law firms that were tasked by the Court with working on reuniting the children with their parents. And according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services the Office of Refugee Resettlement has released all 545 children to sponsors or foster care.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the trauma children experience from being separated from their parents is devastating, inhumane, and often irreversible. The long-term separation of these children from their parents further aggravates their suffering, deteriorates their mental health, and stifles their recovery.

The County of Los Angeles (County) stands in deep opposition to the separation of children from their parents, and demands that separated children be expeditiously reunited with their parents and families. The County has also made a bold commitment to advancing the wellbeing and protecting the rights of immigrant children and their families by supporting them with available wraparound services in a linguistically, culturally and immigration-sensitive manner.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer to send a 5-signature letter to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Senate and House Leadership, and the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation denouncing the Administration's policies and efforts

that separate children from their parents, and to expeditiously reunite separated children with their parents.

2. Direct the Executive Director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) in the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs to investigate if it is possible to find out whether any separated children live in the County and what support services they and their families need;

3. Direct OIA to convene a workgroup composed of appropriate stakeholders to collaborate on reuniting the separated children with their parents and families, and to make available County wraparound services to the children and their parents, sponsors, and families.

4. Direct OIA to report back on the third and fourth directives in thirty (30) days.

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