

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General of the United States  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

Like millions of Americans, we have read with increasing alarm reports of children being separated from their parents at the southern border. Although enforcing our immigration laws is an essential responsibility of the federal government, it must be done in a way that is consistent with our values and ordinary human decency.

The current family separation crisis has multiple contributing causes, including court decisions that require release rather than detention of children but not parents who enter our country illegally. But the immediate cause of the crisis is your Department's recent institution of a "zero tolerance" policy under which all adults who enter the United States illegally are referred for prosecution, regardless of whether they are accompanied by minor children.

We support the administration's efforts to enforce our immigration laws, but we cannot support implementation of a policy that results in the categorical forced separation of minor children from their parents. We therefore ask you to work with the relevant Administration officials to stop the separation of families pursuant to the Department's zero tolerance policy while Congress works out a solution that enables faster processing of individuals who enter our country illegally. We believe a reasonable path forward can be found that accommodates the need to enforce our laws while holding true to other, equally essential values.

cc: The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen, Secretary of Homeland Security