

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