



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
1156 15TH STREET, NW SUITE 915 · WASHINGTON, DC 20005 · P (202) 463-2940 · F (202) 463-2953
E-MAIL: WASHINGTONBUREAU@NAACPNET.ORG · WEB ADDRESS WWW.NAACP.ORG

URGENT ACTION ALERT

DATE: June 15, 2018
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau

URGE CONGRESS TO PASS THE *KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER ACT* TO PROHIBIT THE SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR PARENTS

S. 3036 WOULD STOP THE INHUMANE PRACTICE OF TAKING CHILDREN AWAY FROM THEIR PARENTS WHO ARE TRYING TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES

THE ISSUE:

Under a new policy designed and enforced by the current administration and being led by the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security, immigrant families trying to enter the United States – either illegally or through legal means, which includes presenting themselves at a designated U.S. Port of Entry and stating that they are seeking asylum – are separated; with the parents going to jail and the children being sent to foster care or more often government detention facilities. This is occurring with alarming frequency; in the six weeks between mid-April and the end of May of this year, over 2,000 children were separated from their parents.

Typically, people apprehended crossing into the US are held in immigration detention and sent before an immigration judge to see if they will be deported as unauthorized immigrants. But migrants who have been referred for criminal prosecution, as is now happening, get sent to a federal jail and brought before a federal judge a few weeks later to see if they'll get prison time. That's where justification for the separation occurs — because you can't be kept with your children in federal jail. There are also some cases in which immigrant families are being separated after coming to ports of entry and presenting themselves for asylum — thus following U.S. law.

To counter the atrocities which are occurring daily, Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris (both from California) and 30 of their colleagues have introduced S. 3036, the *Keep Families Together Act*. This legislation, which was developed in consultation with child welfare experts including the American Academy of Pediatrics, is intended to ensure that the federal government is acting in the best interest of children. It would stop the separation of children from their families, except in extreme circumstances in which the child is judged to be in imminent danger. "An agent or officer of a designated agency shall be prohibited from removing a child from his or her parent or legal guardian, at or near the port of entry or within 100 miles of the border of the United States."

Ripping families apart is immoral and un-American. There is no law requiring the separation of children from their families simply because their parents were seeking a better life in the U.S. In light of recent actions we need strong policy and we need it now. The NAACP supports S. 3036, the *Keep Families Together Act.*, and urge its immediate enactment.

THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:

Contact your Representative and both your Senators and **URGE THEM TO WORK AGAINST THE SEPARATION OF FAMILIES AND TO SUPPORT S. 3036, THE *KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER ACT***. To contact your Senators and Representative, you may:

✓ **Make a Phone Call:**

Call your Senators and your Representative in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to your Senators'/Congressman's offices. The switchboard phone number is **(202) 224-3121** (see message section, below).

✓ **Write a Letter**

To write letters to your Senators, send them to:

The Honorable (name of Senator)
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

To write a letter to your Representative, send it to:

The Honorable (name of Representative)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

**A SAMPLE
LETTER IS
ATTACHED**

✓ **Send a Fax**

If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators' or Representative's offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ **Send an E-Mail**

To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to www.senate.gov; click on "*Find Your Senators*". Look up your Senators by state; go to their web sites for e-mail addresses. To send an e-mail to your Representative, go to www.house.gov, and click on "Find Your Representative" (on the right hand side of the screen) and enter your zip code. This should take you to a screen that identifies who your Representative is and how to get in touch with him or her.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!

THE MESSAGE

- Tearing apart children from their parents is immoral and un-American and should be stopped immediately;
- There is no U.S. law requiring the separation of children from their families simply because their parents were seeking a better life in the U.S. In light of recent actions we need strong policy and we need it now;
- In the six weeks between mid-April and the end of May of this year, over 2,000 children were separated from their parents.
- There have been cases in which immigrant families are being separated after coming to ports of entry and presenting themselves for asylum — thus following US law;
- Contact your Representative and both your Senators and urge them to work against the separation of families and to support S. 3036, the *Keep Families Together Act*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!

If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

MEMBERSHIP IS POWER! JOIN THE NAACP TODAY.

To become an NAACP member or to sign up for e-mail legislative and press updates, visit www.naacp.org

Sample Letter

(date)

The Honorable _____
United States Senate / House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510 / 20515

RE: MY STAUNCH OPPOSITION TO SEPERATING CHILDREN FROM THEIR PARENTS

Dear Senator / Representative _____;

As your constituent, I urge you, in the strongest terms possible, to support legislation which would make it clear that children should not be taken away from their parents in cases in which their only "crime" was trying to make a better life for their family in the United States. We must do more than talk about what an atrocity this policy is – we must act. Ripping families apart is immoral and un-American.

The Administration's current policy of "zero tolerance" has resulted in over 2,000 children being taken from their families in just six weeks. Ripping families apart is immoral and un-American. There is no law requiring the separation of children from their families simply because their parents were seeking a better life in the U.S. In light of recent actions we need strong policy and we need it now. I strongly support S. 3036, the *Keep Families Together Act.*, and urge its immediate enactment.

This legislation, which was developed in consultation with child welfare experts including the American Academy of Pediatrics, is intended to ensure that the federal government is acting in the best interest of children. It would stop the separation of children from their families, except in extreme circumstances in which the child is judged to be in imminent danger. "An agent or officer of a designated agency shall be prohibited from removing a child from his or her parent or legal guardian, at or near the port of entry or within 100 miles of the border of the United States."

Please do all you can to see that these children are not separated from their parents. The time to act is now; the need is immediate. Please let me know what you are doing, and what more I can do to help.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and
remember to include your address)

***Remember to contact your
Representative and BOTH
your Senators.***