



Washington State Senate

June 20, 2018

The Honorable Patty Murray , U.S. Senator
The Honorable Adam Smith, U.S. Rep
The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rogers, U.S. Rep.
The Honorable Jamie Herrera Beutler, U.S. Rep.
The Honorable Denny Heck, U.S. Rep.
The Honorable Dan Newhouse, U.S. Rep.
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Rick Larsen, U.S. Rep
The Honorable Dave Reichart, U.S. Rep.
The Honorable Suzan DelBene, U.S. Rep.
The Honorable Derek Kilmer, U.S. Rep.
The Honorable Pramila Jayapal, U.S. Rep.
House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation:

From our beginning, the United States has existed as a beacon for those seeking a better life. People come here in search of religious freedom, opportunity and safety for their children. Our country is a welcoming place that gives everyone the chance to work toward the American dream.

The images of children being ripped away from parents fleeing violence and seeking asylum not only contradict who we are as Americans, these atrocious actions run counter to who we are as human beings.

After enormous outcry from people across our country, President Trump has apparently relented and signed an executive order to temporarily end his administration's horrific policy.

Now that the Trump Administration is claiming that the most appalling aspect of its "Zero Tolerance" program has ceased, we are calling on you, our congressional delegation, to ensure the thousands of children separated from their parents are immediately reunited.

Since the Trump Administration began these callous and disgusting acts, we have heard from our constituents in great numbers, asking what we as a state can do. Terrorizing actions like those of federal immigration agents at the direction of the Trump Administration have dramatic chilling effects on law-abiding immigrants within our communities causing them to avoid

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interactions with local law enforcement, hospitals and social service agencies. That's why earlier this session, Sen. Lisa Wellman sponsored SB 5689 to ensure our local law enforcement and state agencies cannot be used as arms of federal immigration authorities.

But beyond such measures, our hands are tied and the solution to this heartbreaking issue is in your hands. We are fearful that this reckless and mean-spirited policy will lead to a humanitarian crisis and families being permanently torn apart or placed in what are essentially internment camps. There are already reports of parents being deported while their children remain in federal custody.

Please do not delay. Families belong together. We stand with immigrant families already living in our state, and we support refugees that continue to come to the United States in search of asylum, despite the misguided and destructive policies of the Trump Administration.

We applaud our leaders in Washington that continue to work toward an end to family separations and implore those who have yet to act to do so immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon K. Nelson".

Senator Sharon Nelson
Senate Majority Leader
34th Legislative District