

June 20, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Attorney General Sessions and Secretary Nielsen,

On behalf of the 57 undersigned national and 294 state and local Jewish organizations and institutions, we write to express our strong opposition to the recently expanded “zero-tolerance” policy that includes separating children from their migrant parents when they cross the border. This policy undermines the values of our nation and jeopardizes the safety and well-being of thousands of people.

As Jews, we understand the plight of being an immigrant fleeing violence and oppression. We believe that the United States is a nation of immigrants and how we treat the stranger reflects on the moral values and ideals of this nation.

Many of these migrant families are seeking asylum in the United States to escape violence in Central America. Taking children away from their families is unconscionable. Such practices inflict unnecessary trauma on parents and children, many of whom have already suffered traumatic experiences. This added trauma negatively impacts physical and mental health, including increasing the risk of early death.¹

Separating families is a cruel punishment for children and families simply seeking a better life and exacerbates existing challenges in our immigration system. It adds to the backlog of deportation cases and legal challenges in federal courts, places thousands more immigrants in detention facilities and shelters, endangers the lives of more children, and instills additional fear in people seeking safety in our country. In addition, those seeking asylum or other legal protection face numerous obstacles to making a claim, especially from detention. Separating family members at the border would force families into two or more immigration cases instead of a single case for each family, harming their ability to present a successful case.

Our Jewish faith demands of us concern for the stranger in our midst. Our own people’s history as “strangers” reminds us of the many struggles faced by immigrants today and compels our commitment to an immigration system in this country that is compassionate and just. We urge

¹ Michael MacKenzie, Emily Bosk, and Charles Zeanah, “Separation Families at the Border- Consequences for Children’s Health and Well-Being,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, June 15, 2017, *available at* <https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMp1703375>.

you to immediately rescind the “zero tolerance” policy and uphold the values of family unity and justice on which our nation was built.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Academy for Jewish Religion
Ameinu
American Committee for Shaare Zedek
American Conference of Cantors
American Jewish Committee (AJC)
American Jewish World Service
Anti-Defamation League
Avodah
B’nai B’rith International
Be'chol Lashon
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Eitzah Center for Congregational Leadership
Eshel
Habonim Dror North America
Hadar Institute
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
HIAS
Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals
International Association of Women in Radio and Television-USA
International Rabbinic Fellowship
J Street
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance
Jewish Women International
jGirls Magazine
Keshet
Men of Reform Judaism
National Association of Jewish Legislators
National Council of Jewish Women
Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC)
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
New York Board of Rabbis
NFTY – The Reform Jewish Youth Movement
Orthodox Union
Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbinical Council of America
Reconstructing Judaism

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Sephardic Heritage International DC (SHIN DC)
The Association of Rabbis & Cantors
The Cantors Assembly
The Center for Jewish Ethics at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
The Detroit National Center for Civil Discourse
The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding
The Jewish Theological Seminary
The Shalom Center
The Workmen's Circle
Tikkun Magazine
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
Union for Reform Judaism
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Uri L'Tzedek, The Orthodox Social Justice Movement
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's Rabbinic Network
Women's League for Conservative Judaism

State and Local Organizations

Arizona

Arizona Jews for Justice
National Council of Jewish Women, Arizona
Section

California

Adath Israel of San Francisco
Beit TShuvah
Beth Jacob Congregation
Bnai David-Judea
Community Shul of Montecito and Santa
Barbara
Congregation Kol Shofar
Jewish Center for Justice
Jewish Community Relations Council of San
Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma,
Alameda and Contra Costa Counties
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles
Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley
Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara
Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley
Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California
(JPAC)
Jewish Vocational Service
Kenesset Israel Torah Center

Leo Baeck Temple
National Council of Jewish Women, Los
Angeles Section
Orange County Jewish Coalition for Refugees
Shalom Bayit
Temple Beth Am
Temple Beth Emet
Wilshire Boulevard Temple
YINBH Beverly Hills Synagogue

Colorado

DAT Minyan
National Council of Jewish Women, Colorado
Section

Connecticut

Beth Sholom B'nai Israel
Congregation Agudath Sholom
Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford
Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven
United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford,
New Canaan and Darien

Delaware

Jewish Family Services

District of Columbia

Adas Israel Congregation
Congregation Bet Mishpachah
Hill Havurah

Florida

Aventura Turnberry Jewish Center
Bet Shira
Bnai Torah Congregation
Congregation Beth Israel of Ocala
Jewish Community Relations Council of the
Greater Miami Jewish Federation
Jewish Federation of Greater Orlando
Miami Beach Jewish Community Center
National Council of Jewish Women, Florida
State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater
Miami Section
National Council of Jewish Women,
Sarasota/Manatee Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Valencia
Shores Section
Orlando Jewish Community Relations Council
Rabbinical Association of Greater
Miami/Miami Jewish Federation
Temple Beth Or
Temple Beth Or-Miami
Temple Beth Sholom

Georgia

Hadassah Greater Atlanta
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Atlanta

Illinois

Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation
Beth Emet The Free Synagogue
Jewish Child and Family Services Chicago
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Chicago
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Springfield
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
National Council of Jewish Women, Illinois
State Policy Advocate

National Council of Jewish Women, South
Cook Section
New Jewish Outreach-Renewing the
Conversation
SVARA: A Traditionally Radical Yeshiva
Tzedek Chicago

Indiana

Congregation Shaarey Tefilla, Carmel
Congregation B'nai Jacob
Congregation Beth-El Zedeck
Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations
Council
Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne
Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis
Temple Adath B'nai Israel

Iowa

Agudas Achim Congregation
Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines
Temple Adath B'nai Israel
Tifereth Israel Synagogue
University of Iowa Louis Shulman Hillel
Foundation

Kansas

Jewish Family Services of Greater Kansas City

Kentucky

Jewish Federation of Louisville
Jewish Federation of the Bluegrass, Inc.
Ohavay Zion Synagogue
National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville
Section

Louisiana

Congregation Beth Israel
Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater
New Orleans Section
Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation

Maine

National Council of Jewish Women, Maine
Section

Maryland

Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation
Baltimore Jewish Council
Habonim Dror Camp Moshava
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Greater Washington
Jews United for Justice
New Tamid
Temple Beth Ami

Massachusetts

Beth Tikvah Synagogue of Westborough
Congregation Dorshei Tzedek
Congregation Shaarei Tefillah
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jewish Children & Family Services of Greater
Boston
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Greater Boston
Jewish Vocational Service Boston
Moishe Kavod House
Temple Beth Zion (TBZ)
The Young Israel of Brookline

Michigan

Jewish Community Relations Council/AJC -
Detroit
Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County
Kehillat Etz Chayim
National Council of Jewish Women, Michigan
State Policy Advocate

Minnesota

Adath Jeshurun Congregation (Hesed and
Women's League)
Bet Shalom Congregation
Beth El Synagogue
Beth Jacob Congregation
Congregation Darchei Noam
Hadassah Minneapolis
Herzl Camp
Hesed Committee- Adath Jeshurun
Congregation
Jewfolk, Inc.
Jewish Community Action

Jewish Family and Children's Service of
Minneapolis
Jewish Family Service of St. Paul
Jewish Housing and Programming (J-HAP)
Mayim Rabim Congregation
Minnesota Hillel
Minnesota Rabbinical Association
Mount Zion Temple, St. Paul
National Council of Jewish Women,
Minnesota Section
National Council of Jewish Women,
Minnesota State Policy Advocate
Rimon: The Minnesota Jewish Arts Council
Shir Tikvah Congregation
St. Paul Jewish Federation
Talmud Torah of Saint Paul
Temple Israel
Temple of Aaron
Women of Adath

Minnesota and the Dakotas

Jewish Family and Community Services
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Minnesota and the Dakotas
Hadassah Upper Midwest
Jewish Historical Society of the Upper
Midwest

Missouri

Bais Abraham Congregation
Jewish Community Relations Council of St.
Louis
Jewish Family & Children's Service of St.
Louis

New Jersey

Congregation Bnai Jacob Jersey City.
Highland Park Conservative Temple -
Congregation Anshe Emeth
Highland Park Minyan
Jewish Community Relations Committee of
Northern New Jersey
Jewish Family Service of MetroWest
Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest
Maayan of West Orange

National Council of Jewish Women, Essex
County Section
Oheb Shalom Congregation.
Temple Avodat Shalom
Temple Emanu-El
Temple Israel and Jewish Community Center
The Cantors Assembly
United Synagogue of Hoboken

New Mexico

Jewish Care Program
Jewish Federation of New Mexico

New York

Anshe Chesed
Beth David Synagogue
B'nai Jeshurun
Brooklyn Heights Synagogue
Congregation Beth Abraham-Jacob
Congregation Beth Elohim
Congregation Beth Hamedresh - Beth Israel
Congregation Beth Sholom
Congregation Etz Chaim
Congregation Mount Sinai
Congregation Tehillah
Educational Alliance
Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition
Hillel Community Day School
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Buffalo
Jewish Community Relations Council of New
York
Jewish Community Relations Council of the
Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester
Jewish Federation and Foundation of
Rockland County
Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester
Kane Street Synagogue, Brooklyn
Kolot Chayenu
Muslim Jewish Solidarity Committee
North Country Reform Temple
Prospect Heights Shul
SAJ: Judaism that Stands for All
Temple Beth Am
Temple Beth David
Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Temple Beth Sholom
Temple Beth-El
Temple B'rith Kodesh
Temple Chaverim of Long Island
Temple Emanu-El
Temple Emanu-El of Canarsie
Temple Israel of the City of New York
Temple Shaaray Tefila
Temple Sinai
The Interfaith Center of New York
The New Jewish Home
T'hilah
Union Temple of Brooklyn
West End Synagogue

North Carolina

Beth Meyer Synagogue
Carolina Jews for Justice
Jewish Family Services of Greater Charlotte
Jewish Federation of Durham Chapel Hill

North Dakota

Temple Beth El

Ohio

Beth Jacob Congregation Columbus Ohio
Cincinnati Jewish Community Relations
Council
Congregation Agudas Achim
Congregation Torat Emet
Jewish Community Relations Committee of
Columbus
Jewish Family Service of Cincinnati
Jewish Family Services Columbus
Jewish Federation of Cleveland Community
Relations Committee
Jewish Vocational Service Career Services
K. K. Bene Israel, Rockdale Temple
National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland
Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Ohio
State Policy Advocate
The Little Minyan Kehilah

Oklahoma

Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City

Jewish Federation of Tulsa

Oregon

Ahavas Torah
Beth Sholom Congregation
Jewish Family & Child Service of Portland
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland

Pennsylvania

Beth Sholom Congregation
Congregation B'nai Harim
Jewish Community Relations Council Greater Philadelphia
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Philadelphia
Jewish Family and Community Services of Pittsburg
Jewish Family Service of the Lehigh Valley
Jewish Federation of Greater Harrisburg
National Council of Jewish Women, Pennsylvania Advocacy Committee
Progressive Jewish Voice of Central Pennsylvania
Temple Beth Shalom, Mechanicsburg
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Pittsburgh
Jewish Federation of the Lehigh Valley
Mekor Habracha/Center City Synagogue
Temple Beth Israel

South Carolina

Charleston Jewish Family Services
Charleston Jewish Federation
Community Relations Council of the Columbia Jewish Federation
Congregation Dor Tikvah
Greenville Jewish Federation
The South Carolina Council on the Holocaust

Tennessee

Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee
Congregation Micah
Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga
Memphis Jewish Federation

Nashville Jewish Social Justice Roundtable
National Council of Jewish Women, Nashville Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Tennessee State Policy Advocate
The Temple, Congregation Ohabai Sholom

Texas

Jewish Family Service Houston
Jewish Family Service of San Antonio, Texas, Inc.
Jewish Federation of San Antonio
National Council of Jewish Women, Austin Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Dallas Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Houston Section
National Council of Jewish Women, San Antonio Section
National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Houston Section

Utah

National Council of Jewish Women, Utah Section

Virginia

Kol Ami: The Northern Virginia Reconstructionist Community

Washington State

Bet Alef Meditative Synagogue
Congregation Beth Israel Walla Walla
Congregation Beth Shalom
Herzl-Ner Tamid Conservative Congregation
Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle
Kadima Reconstructionist Community
Kol HaNeshamah
National Council of Jewish Women, Washington State Policy Advocate
Temple Beth Hatfiloh
Temple B'nai Torah
The Kavana Cooperative

Washington State Jewish Historical Society

Wisconsin

Beth Hillel Temple
Coalition for Jewish Learning
Congregation Beth Jehuda
Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun
Congregation Sinai
Hillel at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
Hillel Milwaukee
Jewish Community Relations Council,
Milwaukee
Jewish Family Services, Inc.
Jewish Museum Milwaukee
Milwaukee Jewish Day School
Milwaukee Jewish Federation
Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education
Resource Center
National Council of Jewish Women,
Milwaukee Section
The Spark Wisconsin
Wisconsin Council of Rabbis
Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle
Wisconsin Jewish Conference

International

Canada

Adath Israel Poale Zedek Anshei Ozeroff
Congregation
National Social Action Committee/Canadian
Council for Reform Judaism