

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

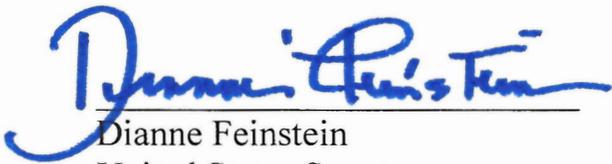
Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan:

We write to express serious concern about recent reports that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) plans to arrest thousands of families and children from their homes and neighborhoods across the United States. Past experience shows that when parents are deported or detained, children are isolated and separated from their families. Too often, they can spend months in foster care or without supervision. In some cases, older siblings are forced to care for their younger brothers and sisters, and tragically some families are never reunited. Accordingly, we urge ICE not to detain vulnerable children and parents who pose no danger to our communities.

Reports indicate that ICE intends to arrest at least 2,500 adults and children in ten major cities. These are not dangerous criminals, but families who have fled violence and poverty in their home countries to seek asylum in the United States. We are especially alarmed that ICE intends to conduct these arrests despite reported objections from then DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen and then Acting Director of ICE, Ronald Vitiello. According to reports, Secretary Nielsen and Acting Director Vitiello warned that ICE has insufficient plans to ensure that young children would be adequately cared for during and after these arrests. Specifically, because the arrests could occur during school hours, thousands of children could be separated from their families when their parents are arrested. Additionally, parents of United States citizens would be separated from their children, who could not be detained in immigration custody.

Family separation is cruel and unacceptable, especially in light of the Administration's disastrous zero-tolerance policy which separated thousands of families, many of whom have still not been reunited. It is simply not appropriate to make children the collateral damage of policies that are intended to convey a "show of force." Therefore, we ask you to terminate any plans to arrest and detain families who have sought asylum in the United States. Additionally, please provide answers to the attached questions by June 3, 2019. Thank you for your consideration and for your prompt response.

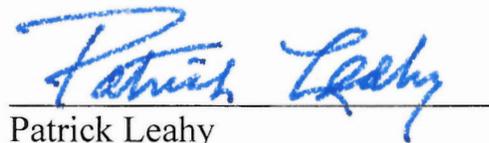
Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



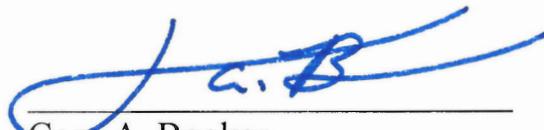
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



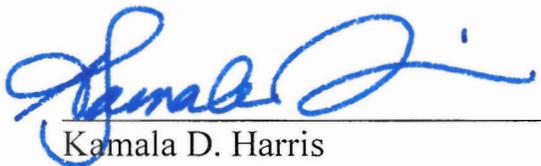
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

Please provide answers to the following questions as promptly as possible:

1. Please provide a list of cities in which ICE intends to arrest families from their homes and neighborhoods, as well as a list of detention facilities to which ICE intends to transport these families.
2. Does ICE intend to open new family detention facilities as a result of this initiative? Does ICE intend to request additional funding for family detention facilities as a result of this initiative?
3. Please provide a description of ICE's efforts to coordinate with local law enforcement prior to each arrest. Please describe all efforts that ICE has already undertaken, as well as efforts that ICE plans to take going forward.
4. Please provide a detailed description of ICE's plans to ensure that families are not separated during these raids.
5. Please describe how ICE intends to ensure that children who are United States citizens, who cannot lawfully be placed in immigration custody, are not separated from their primary caregivers in the course of this operation.
6. Please explain what, if any, objections were voiced by prior DHS and ICE leadership with respect to the plan to arrest thousands of families in their homes and neighborhoods. How has ICE accounted for these concerns?
7. Why has ICE decided to use its detention resources to target families seeking asylum, rather than detaining dangerous criminals who pose a threat to public safety?