



United States Senate

August 12, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan:

In the wake of the large deportation raids on Mississippi food processing plants, I write to express my concern that the Department of Homeland Security is separating hundreds of U.S. citizen children from their parents, even though those parents present no risk to those children or danger to the public safety or national security of the United States.

The scenes of children weeping after their missing parents are heartbreaking. The deportation raids took place on the first day of school and reports indicate that the next day more than 200 children missed class. Of the 680 people arrested in the raids, over 300 are still in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

It is troubling that given ICE's limited resources, hardworking families doing a dangerous and backbreaking job in rural America are being prioritized for deportation instead of dangerous criminals and terrorists. This is especially true, as ICE is already detaining record numbers of people – over ten thousand more than that Congressional funding authorized – in inhumane conditions. Separating these workers from their children makes a tragic situation worse.

The separation of any parent from a child is traumatic and the danger to the health and well-being of the child is so grave that it must be avoided. The suffering does not end when the child reunites with one parent, but another remains missing. I ask that you share your plans to reunite these families and take steps to ensure that children are not left alone without adult family members in future ICE raids.

ICE must avoid unnecessary harm to children. Family separations, except in rare cases, simply should not happen. I urge you to prioritize the limited resources of ICE on violent criminals and terrorists, not on hardworking families.

I would appreciate an immediate response to this pressing matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dianne" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Feinstein".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Matthew T. Albence
Acting Director, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement