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Statement on the Trump Administration's “Zero Tolerance” Policy and Family Detention

WASHINGTON, D.C. –Today, the National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition (NJJJPC) released a statement calling for an immediate end to the Trump administration’s policy of “zero tolerance” and incarcerating immigrant youth and families.

“Unfortunately, these policies carry forward a long and ugly history in the United States of treating people of color inhumanely,” says Sarah Breyer, NJJPC Steering Committee Member and President and Executive Director of the National Juvenile Justice Network. “This is not the first time that we have separated children of color from their families and institutionalized them 'for their own good' and when they pose no public safety threat. It's past time that we stopped these practices.”

“Detention is not the answer for children and families, especially as a response to those families who come to the U.S. seeking refuge. We have known for years that incarceration exacerbates trauma and stress, and that it has no positive benefits. Children and families belong in the community where they can receive supports and resume normal daily activities,” says Marcy Mistrett, NJJPC Steering Committee Member and Chief Executive Officer of the Campaign for Youth Justice.

For the full statement, please see below and for additional information on NJJPC, go to www.promotesafecommunities.org.

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The National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition (NJJJPC) is a collaborative array of youth- and family-serving, social justice, law enforcement, corrections, and faith-based organizations, working to ensure healthy families, build strong communities and improve public safety by promoting fair and effective policies, practices and programs for youth involved or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.



A National Juvenile Justice Coalition of State and National Members

**Statement Opposing the Trump Administration's
Policy of “Zero Tolerance” and Family Detention
June 22, 2018**

The following statement has been issued by the National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition Steering Committee members:

The National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition (NJJDPC) calls for an immediate end to the Trump administration’s policy of “zero tolerance” and incarcerating immigrant youth and families. As a national collaborative of 300 youth and family-serving, social justice, law enforcement, corrections, and faith-based organizations, we work regularly to advance policies that ensure healthy families, build strong communities, and improve public safety. The administration’s current policies work in gross opposition to all of these goals.

As defenders of children, families, and communities, we urge this administration and Congress to stop applying the failed “tough on crime” policies to the immigrant community. For years, our Coalition has pointed out that incarceration is not the answer to justice nor is it in the interest of public safety. We have called on previous administrations and Congresses to respond to children who come in contact with the law with age-appropriate responses that engage their families, and stabilize them in communities. We have unequivocally shown the failure of incarceration to advance child wellness or public safety, particularly in cases where children are securely detained for non-criminal behavior (e.g. truancy, running away, curfew violations) and certainly when there is no public safety threat.

The children and families who are fleeing violence in their countries of origin are not engaging in criminal behavior. They are not public safety threats. They are requesting asylum and protection in our country. To incarcerate them, even as family units, is inhumane and unacceptable.

We call on the administration and Congress to support these children and families in communities instead of detaining them. Evidence-based practices and human rights law call on the U.S. to treat these families humanely, to respond to their underlying trauma, and provide the supports necessary to help them heal and recover while their immigration claims are pending.

We are America, a country built by immigrants who have strengthened our country and our culture for centuries. We must not abandon our role as defenders of freedom. Families belong together, but not in detention.