

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 56 undersigned national and 293 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 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 Tefiilla, 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 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**

Ansche 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 Chayeinu  
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