

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Kirstjen M. Nielsen,

On behalf of Think Small, I ask you to stop separating children from their parents crossing the border without documentation and immediately begin the work of reuniting families.

Sending children to mass detention centers or foster care because there is a zero-tolerance prosecution policy for their parents is detrimental to their health, development and well-being. It is critical that these young children and their parents remain in a setting that allows them to stay together as a family.

Think Small is a Minnesota-based non-profit agency with a mission of advancing quality care and education of all children in their crucial early years. We understand the importance that early relationships and experiences with loving parents or other primary caregivers play in brain development, social-emotional and cognitive skills, health, and future success in school and life.

Simply put, we must keep families intact.

Please abandon your policy of referring all persons crossing the United States border without documentation to the Department of Justice for federal prosecution on criminal charges. This policy, combined with the “zero-tolerance” prosecution policy will only result in more unnecessary separations resulting in trauma to young children and their families. Having border agents forcibly remove young children from the arms of their parents and place them in institutional care will have, and is having, devastating consequences.

We urge you to stop family separations immediately and reunite the families who have already been torn apart. There must be a more compassionate solution to the dilemma along our borders.

Sincerely,



Barbara Yates
President and CEO, Think Small