

Law Enforcement Leaders Urge Alternatives to Family Detention

June 27, 2018

Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force | Sign-On Letters

Speaker Paul Ryan

United States House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

United States House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

Minority Leader Charles Schumer

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Pelosi and Minority Leader Schumer:

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As law enforcement leaders focused on public safety and fiscal responsibility, we write in support of the use of alternatives to detention (ATDs), after appropriate vetting, as a substitute to detaining families in immigration detention. With various recent executive branch and legislative branch proposals to detain parents and children together in immigration detention, we would urge policymakers to examine proven, effective ATDs as a cheaper and better solution than detaining families that pose no threat to their communities.

Law enforcement leaders, like other Americans, were deeply concerned about family separation. In addition to the toll that policy was taking on families, we also were concerned about its impact on communities, threatening to increase fear in our communities and undermine trust between immigrants and local law enforcement. We were encouraged by the administration's issuance of an executive order on June 20 that sought to bring an end to widespread family separations.

However, we continue to be concerned about the executive order's replacement for family separation - family detention. Simply stated, we do not believe that across-the-board family detention is the solution to family separation. Most families do not pose a threat to the community at large and, accordingly, our juvenile detention system is designed around keeping the family together. Given the risks to children's physical and emotional development posed by prolonged detention, we urge policy makers to consider alternatives.

Congress should consider alternatives that keep families together outside of immigration detention, while ensuring that families attend immigration hearings and required immigration check-ins. Programs such as the Family Case Management pilot program, which was terminated in 2017, should be examined because we understand this program reportedly kept families out of immigration detention facilities while getting them to their immigration hearings more than 99 percent of the time. From our experience in the criminal justice system other types of ATDs, ranging from GPS monitors to telephonic check-ins are highly successful at a fraction of the cost of detention.

Taxpayers stand to save millions of dollars in detention costs each day through the use of ATDs. In fiscal year (FY) 2018, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) average cost of detaining a person in immigration detention is above \$200 each day. And the average cost of detaining a person in specialized family detention is nearly one-and-a-half times as much, well above \$300 per person per day. By contrast, the average ATD contract costs only \$5-6 per person per day, a fraction of the amount it costs to physically detain somebody.

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We urge you to examine options that keep families together and avoid the prolonged detention of children, namely ATDs. ATDs are proven to be effective and save taxpayer money. We believe that is a better solution to address migration by families at the border.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you in a strong partnership to ensure the safety of America.

Sincerely,

Chief J. Thomas Manger, Montgomery County, MD, President of Major Cities Chiefs Association, *LEITF Co-Chair*

Chief Art Acevedo, Houston, TX, Vice President of Major Cities Chiefs Association, *LEITF Co-Chair*

Sheriff Margaret Mims, Fresno County, CA, *LEITF Co-Chair*

Executive Director Chuck Wexler, Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

Retired Lt. Andy Norris, Tuscaloosa, AL

Chief Chris Magnus, Tucson, AZ

Chief Mike Soelberg, Gilbert, AZ

Chief Roy Minter, Peoria, AZ

Chief Sylvia Moir, Tempe, AZ

Retired Chief Roberto Villaseñor, Tucson, AZ

Chief Steve Stahl, Maricopa, AZ

Retired Chief James Lopez, Los Angeles County, CA

Chief David Valentin, Santa Ana, CA

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Sheriff Joe Pelle, Boulder, CO

Chief Nick Metz, Aurora, CO

Chief Peter Newsham, Washington, DC

Chief John Mina, Orlando, FL

Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald, Story County, IA

Sheriff Bill McCarthy, Polk County, IA

Director of Public Safety Mark Prosser, Storm Lake, IA

Chief Mike Tupper, Marshalltown, IA

Sheriff Lonny Pulkrabek, Johnson County, IA

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Retired Chief Ron Teachman, South Bend, IN

Chief Michael Diekhoff, Bloomington, IN

Chief Scott Ruskowski, South Bend, IN

Deputy Chief Jose H. Salcido, Wichita, KS

Retired Chief James Hawkins, Garden City, KS

Superintendent Michael S. Harrison, New Orleans, LA

Chief Brian Kyes, Chelsea, MA

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Chief Richard Biehl, Dayton, OH

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Public Safety Commissioner Steven Pare, Providence, RI

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Chief Andy Harvey, Palestine, TX

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Chief Carmen Best, Seattle, WA

Sheriff Mitzi Johanknecht, King County, WA

Asst. Chief Randy Gaber, Madison, WI

Chief Michael Koval, Madison, WI

Sheriff David J. Mahoney, Dane County, WI

Signatures updated as of July 3, 2018 3 pm ET

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