



From the Office of

Christine James-Brown • CWLA President & CEO

Dear Colleague:

In recent days, we have been receiving an increasing number of calls and e-mails, from members and non-members, asking what we are doing to address the terrible “zero tolerance” border enforcement policy implemented by the President and Attorney General.

We are outraged by the continuing stories of children being separated—and, in fact, traumatized—by this policy. As we state in our [CWLA 2018 Legislative Agenda](#):

*“When children are separated from parents, they face short- and long-term psychological damage, including depression, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, feelings of abandonment, and suicidal thoughts. Being separated from their family members and their communities, cultural familiarities, and schools and other connections can cause children to struggle with their identity and face an undue sense of isolation, adding further stress to an already traumatic situation. **We call on Congress to enact fair immigration reform, to suspend mass deportations, and oppose policies that seek to deter immigration by separating children from their parents.**”*

In our *National Blueprint for Excellence in Child Welfare*, we give a more in-depth review of our position in [the chapter on Protecting the Dreamers and Immigrant Families](#), stating:

“Family unity is recognized as a fundamental human right, enshrined in international law. Moreover, separating children from their parents is cruel, traumatizing all those involved. The American Academy of Pediatrics, in a recent statement, expressed serious concern over the proposal to separate migrant parents from their children, calling the plan ‘harsh and counterproductive’ and stating that authorities should ‘exercise caution to ensure that the emotional and physical stress children experience as they seek refuge in the United States is not exacerbated by the additional trauma of being separated from their siblings, parents or other relatives and caregivers.”

We agree. We have been working with numerous groups and coalitions to express our opposition. Now your members of Congress need to hear from you.

Now is the time for CWLA members and advocates for children to act. Use our [Advocacy Center](#). We have a pre-written letter that addresses both the issue of family separation and the possibility that the House of Representatives may schedule votes on two different immigration bills pertaining to family separation and the Dreamers. You can enter your zip code and your members of Congress will appear. The letter can be edited, as well, if you want to speak to the issue of family separation. By all means, let your members of Congress know how you feel.

We hope you will help us deliver the message that the separation of these children from their families is not who we are as a country, as a society, or as voters. Make your voice heard!

Sincerely,

Christine James Brown

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CWLA President & CEO

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