



More than 100 Groups Call on Government to Stop Using Information from Children to Deport their Family Members

112 organizations all declare policy wrong and illegal.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#FamiliesBelongTogether and #ParentTrap

<https://bit.ly/stop-parent-trap-dhs-hhs>

November 28, 2018 – The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University of Law, the Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law and the National Immigrant Justice Center, along with 109 groups, sent a letter today to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) demanding the agencies stop the inhumane and illegal policy of using information obtained from vulnerable immigrant children to find, arrest, and deport their parents and relatives when they come forward to assume responsibility for the children. The first arrests took place last summer and the practice was formalized as policy this spring by DHS and HHS. Given the continued danger to immigrant children, as evidenced last weekend by the tear gas fired by American officers to push immigrants, including families, from the border fence, the need to protect these children from cruel and inhumane treatment has never been greater.

“Children are arriving on our border asking for protection. When they share information in hopes of getting that protection, the Trump administration uses it to jail and deport their loved ones.” said Heidi Altman, director of policy, National Immigrant Justice Center. **“Children are suffering, parents are being forced to make impossible choices, and how tragic that it is all by design. We reject this administration's cruelty.”**

“Using the words of children to deport their own families is beyond the pale,” said the Brennan Center’s [Rachel Levinson-Waldman](#). **“This administration has already been tearing families apart; playing them against one another is a new low. I can think of nothing more cynical or more destructive. That’s why it’s time to take action. These agencies can stop this devastating practice now. No American should stand for it.”**

“HHS and DHS are using children to set a trap for their parents. 112 organizations agree: Using a child to trap a parent is wrong.” said Harrison Rudolph, an associate at the Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law. **“This letter shows widespread consensus**



that these practices are an illegal abuse of vulnerable people. Every parent deserves personal privacy and human dignity. Every child deserves to be with their parents. These practices are keeping more children separated for more time. HHS and DHS must immediately stop these abominable practices."

When children crossing the border are detained, one of the first questions that Customs and Border Protection and the Office of Refugee Resettlement ask them is whether they have family or friends in the U.S. that might be able to take care of them. When parents and relatives come forward to care for these children, they and every member of their household undergoes fingerprinting that leaves them vulnerable to enforcement actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This policy forces these individuals to choose between coming forward to care for a beloved child and their own safety—and when a parent or relative is targeted for deportation it leaves children burdened with guilt and without a caretaker.

DHS and HHS have had binding obligations, under a federal court-sanctioned settlement and subsequent federal statute, to promptly release unaccompanied children, without delay, into the least restrictive setting possible. By threatening sponsors with arrest and deportation, intimidating them from stepping forward, the federal government has extended children's time in HHS custody and resulted in violations of the settlement.

###

Media inquiries for the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law:

Mireya "Mia" Navarro

navarrom@brennan.law.nyu.edu

(646) 925-8760

Media inquiries for the Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law:

Katie Evans

Katie.Evans@georgetown.edu

(202) 662-9879 (desk)

(218) 721-2048 (mobile)

Media inquiries for the National Immigrant Justice Center:

Tara Tidwell Cullen

ttidwellcullen@heartlandalliance.org

(312) 660-1337

###