



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Adam A. Acosta
externalaffairs@hbadc.org

**HBA-DC Issues Statement on Family Separation
And Offers Members Resource List To Get Involved**

(Washington, DC – June 28, 2018) – The Administration’s recent decision to erect barriers against asylum seekers and separate families at the U.S.-Mexico border is contrary to this country’s values of justice. Its “zero-tolerance policy” of criminally prosecuting migrants, separating families, and detaining asylum seekers of all ages is contrary to this country’s ideals and undermines our country’s oath to protect liberty.

The HBA-DC is encouraged to see organizations challenge this policy. The June 20, 2018 Executive Order on family separation frustrates our progress. The Executive Order failed to address the more than two thousand children separated from their parents and results in longer and unwarranted detention terms for them. While the recent federal court decision in San Diego addresses reuniting separated families, its implementation is not certain.

HBA-DC President Richard Rodriguez stated, “immigrants benefit this country through entrepreneurship, labor production, and state and local taxes revenue to the tune of \$12 billion USD annually.” Rodriguez continued, “the depiction of immigrants as lawbreakers is myopic at best and xenophobic at worst, especially when we know that immigrants have lower crime rates than native-born Americans. My mother came to this country as an undocumented immigrant. Like many immigrants she espoused education and work ethic. Her children—my sister, a physician, and me, an attorney—contribute to the fiscal and social wellbeing of this country. We are but an example of the legacy of American immigrants contributing to society. Justice requires that today’s immigrants have an opportunity to make their claims in court and earn a spot in the fabric of this nation. They should be able to do that together as a family unit.”

HBA-DC’s membership consists of countless attorneys with immigrant roots working in public service. And our organization has always supported immigration reform and the rule of law. HBA-DC believes that this issue can and should be addressed with compassion and with fidelity to our laws, and HBA-DC stands in solidarity with those who are being persecuted and criminalized for seeking protection under our laws.

To that end, HBA-DC is offering our membership and those who support us the following resource list. It is listed below and on [our website](#):

Volunteer:

- American Immigration Lawyers' Association [Immigrant Justice Campaign](#)
- [CARA Pro Bono Project](#) for family detention centers in TX, s currently recruiting attorneys, law students and paralegals with experience in asylum work. The group asks [volunteers](#) to be fluent in Spanish or willing to work with an interpreter.
- The El Paso-based [Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center](#) provides legal representation to immigrants who might not be able to afford it otherwise. It's accepting [volunteers](#) and [donations](#).
- [ALDEA – the People's Justice Center](#) at the Berks County Detention Center in PA
- [Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project](#) works to prevent the deportation of asylum-seeking families fleeing violence. The group accepts donations and asks people to sign up for volunteer opportunities [here](#).
- [Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law](#): The lead attorneys from the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law will be having site visits to interview the detained children as allowed under Flores. One such visit is occurring from July 11-12, 2018, at Southwest Key Casa Padre Facility in Brownsville, Texas, where approximately 1,000 children are being held. However, the attorneys will only have two days and 9-12 hours per day to do so. Every interview takes approximately one hour, which means that they will need approximately sixty attorneys, plus interpreters. They need interpreters who speak indigenous Central American languages as well as Spanish and other languages around the world (last week the team needed a Punjabi speaker while interviewing a child at one of the Border Patrol stations). Additionally, the team is also seeking volunteer pediatric medical and therapeutic professionals who can volunteer to provide support onsite both days. These interviews will allow the team to document who these children are, where they are located, who their parents are, and as much as the children can recall of where and when they were separated from their parents so that the team can provide that information to the court and seek their prompt reunification with their families.
 - o [These site visits are ongoing](#), so if you cannot help from July 11-12 but would like to be added to the list of potential volunteers, please complete [this form](#). If your professional and/or linguistic expertise is needed for a site visit, someone from the team of attorneys will contact you. If you would like to support this effort financially, please help pay the travel expenses of volunteers through the GoFundMe campaign [here](#).
- **See a longer list of organizations you can volunteer for [here](#).**

Donate:

- [CARA](#) (listed above) is a consortium of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and various legal service providers. They provide representation to detainees at family detention centers. In recent years, WCL students and faculty have traveled to border areas to volunteer with CARA.
- [Kids in Need of Defense \(KIND\)](#) is a national non-profit organization that provides legal services to children in immigration court. They also advocate for the rights of child migrants. KIND was founded by a WCL alumna, Wendy Young.
- Here in the DC area, the [Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition \(CAIR Coalition\)](#) provides legal services to detained immigrants in Maryland and VA. They are essentially the only non-profit that provides services to immigrant detainees in our area.

- [Al Otro Lado](#) is a binational organization that offers legal services to deportees and migrants in Tijuana, Mexico.
- [RAICES](#) is an immigration non-profit in Texas that provides legal services to immigrant children and families. They're actively involved in the family separation issue.
 - o RAICES has a [Family Reunification Bond Fund](#) that you can support. It helps pay the immigration bonds for detainees in ICE custody.
- The [Center for Gender and Refuge Studies at UC Hastings](#) has been a national leader on gender-based asylum claims and is at the forefront of challenging the recent decision regarding asylum for DV survivors

Take Action:

- **Thursday, June 28, 11AM** – Mass mobilization at the Brownsville Federal Court in TX, led by the ACLU. Join the [#FamiliesBelongTogether rally](#) in Linear Park.. RSVP here or on Facebook and contact Natalie Montelongo at nmontelongo@aclu.org with questions.
- **Friday, June 29, 4:30-6:30PM** – [Families Belong Together](#) is organizing a rally at DHS Headquarters at 4401 Massachusetts Avenue. Keep an eye on the website.
- **Saturday, June 30, from 11AM-2PM** – Another rally is being organized for , down by the White House. This [Families Belong Together Rally](#) is being organized by a coalition of progressive groups and will likely be a large event. Here's the [Facebook page](#) for the rally.
- [Reach out to your member of Congress](#) via the AILA Advocacy Action Center.
- **Ask your member of Congress to cosponsor the following bills here:**
 - o Congress has the opportunity to do something about the humanitarian crisis on our border by passing legislation that would protect families seeking asylum. Find out who your Congressional senators and representatives are [here](#) and ask them to support!
 - o House of Representatives
 - [HB 2572: Protect Family Values at the Border Act](#)
 - [HB 5950/SB 2937: the HELP Separated Children Act](#)
 - [HB 2043/SB 2468: Fair Day in Court for Kids Act of 2018](#)
 - o Senate
 - [SB 3036: Keep Families Together Act](#)
- **Keep track of HNBA's work** and President Erica Mason's advocacy efforts [here](#) and volunteer as you can.
 - o Additionally, HNBA is maintaining an ongoing list of resources and partners on the HNBA's website [here](#). Please continue to check on their website as they add to their list.

About the HBA-DC

The Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, voluntary legal association representing the interests of Hispanic attorneys, judges, law professors, law students, and legal professionals within the greater Washington, D.C. area. Its mission is promoting the professional development of Hispanic lawyers and law students; promoting equal justice and opportunities for all Hispanics; and promoting the appointment of Hispanics to leadership positions in Federal, state, and local governments, in the judiciary, and in other leadership positions. For more information visit <http://www.hbadc.org>.