

BASF/JDC Statement: End Trump Policy that Targets Parents and Sponsors of Unaccompanied Children

September 18, 2017 -- San Francisco -- The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) and the Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) condemn the Trump Administration's policy targeting parents and sponsors of unaccompanied minor children – overwhelmingly children fleeing gang violence in their home countries and seeking safety in the United States - as cruel and morally reprehensible.

Whether documented or undocumented, the parents, guardians and/or sponsors of these children often provide shelter, care, protection and comfort to their traumatized children. The arrest and incarceration of parents and sponsors who are not charged with any crimes makes absolutely no sense from a human or a policy standpoint. It subjects the children and parents and sponsors to continuing trauma, and it is unjust, unnecessary and costly, wasting thousands of taxpayer dollars to house the children and detained parents while lengthy immigration proceedings wind their way through the courts. Further, there is a realistic likelihood that the heightened fear generated by this policy will drive these extremely vulnerable children directly into the hands of predators and human traffickers for protection.

In addition, we believe that the practice of forcing children to unwittingly provide information which can lead to a parent's or close relative's arrest amounts to cruel psychological abuse of the children. Under this policy, the United States government engages in the use of children as bait with the clear intent of targeting and punishing parents. This practice is a continuation of the administration's effort to deter refugees from seeking protection by punishing innocent human beings – children, mothers and fathers - who are fleeing violence and seeking safety.

Local attorneys, including those working with the JDC Immigration Legal Defense Program, continue to provide needed representation to children who have been arrested and denied entry pending asylum hearings as well as parents and sponsors who have been detained by Immigration Customs and Enforcement. We commend and are proud of the attorneys who have and continue to represent these targeted children and families.

To refer a person in need of immigration legal help, direct them to call 415-989-1616.

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The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) is a nonprofit voluntary membership organization of attorneys, law students, and legal professionals in the San Francisco Bay Area. Founded in 1872, BASF enjoys the support of more than 7,300 individuals, law firms, corporate legal departments, and law schools. Through its board of directors, its committees, and its volunteer legal services programs and other community efforts, BASF has worked actively to promote and achieve equal justice for all and oppose discrimination in all its forms, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, sex,

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disability, and sexual orientation. BASF provides a collective voice for public advocacy, advances professional growth and education, and attempts to elevate the standards of integrity, honor, and respect in the practice of law.

The Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) advances fairness and equality by providing pro bono legal services to low-income people and educational programs that foster diversity in the legal profession. JDC is the largest legal services provider in San Francisco. JDC's primary purpose is the delivery of free legal services to low-income San Franciscans, as well as the non-profits that serve them. JDC delivers free legal services through its Legal Services Programs division, which consists of the Pro Bono Legal Services Program, Homeless Advocacy Project, and the Immigration Program. JDC provides enrichment programs to diverse youth and young adults through its Diversity Educational Programs. JDC's programs serve approximately 9,500 disadvantaged San Franciscans a year, with the overarching goal of assisting the community's most vulnerable members with accessing the judicial system and strengthening their personal, professional, and economic security.