



Bay Area Professional, Religious and Community Organizations Demand Trump Administration Reunite Families and Respect the Rule of Law

Diverse group calls upon the Administration to adhere to Court order during rally at San Francisco Federal Building

July 26, 2018 – San Francisco, California – A diverse group of Bay Area organizations will gather today, demanding the Trump Administration immediately and fully comply with federal court orders to reunite families torn apart by the inhumane “zero tolerance” policy and to provide ongoing trauma treatment for affected children. Representatives from professional, religious and community groups will join together at 11 a.m. at the San Francisco Federal Building (90 7th Street) to demand the United States government live up to the inalienable right to human dignity enshrined in our Constitution and to highlight the ongoing medical, legal, and moral emergency created by the government’s unconscionable conduct.

“The recent injunction to end family separation was a promise made in our names to reunite children and parents who have been separated the cruel policies of our government. As the Trump Administration continues to flaunt the rule of law, extending its manufactured crisis, we must remain vigilant to ensure every child is back in their parents’ arms without further delay,” said Ted Lempert, president of Children Now, a leading children’s rights advocacy and research group based in Oakland.

Today marks San Diego federal judge Dana Sabraw’s final deadline: families with children from five to seventeen years old must be reunited. Judge Sabraw recently admonished the government for its noncompliance with duly authorized orders from the court, focusing on the damage caused to these children by forcible separation from their parents. Child trauma experts have repeatedly warned that these actions may have lifelong medical and psychological impacts on affected children.

“Children’s health and well-being are adversely affected by these separations and the resulting institutional care. Harmful effects from the related toxic stress and trauma can last a lifetime. Every attempt should be made to keep families together and out of detention as they await hearings,” said Kris Calvin, CEO of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California.

“Detention inflicts irreparable trauma on children,” said Jesse Hahnel, executive director of the National Center for Youth Law. “While the separation of children from their parents has justifiably sparked outrage, there are an additional ten thousand immigrant children sitting in federal detention facilities today, some of whom have been there for years. These children also need to be released to their families now.”

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The court also called upon the government to allow for nonprofits to receive notice of the reunifications as “common courtesy,” in order to help facilitate reunification. Religious groups play a central role in this process, providing support to those in need at the border and during reunifications. Bay Area religious leaders continue to pressure the government to act righteously in the face of the crisis it created.

“Our teachings hold that we must love our neighbor, welcome the stranger and protect the vulnerable – and there’s no-one more vulnerable than these children. We must solve this crisis and do so now for all our children’s sake,” said Executive Pastor and Canon for Social Justice Ellen Clark-King of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

“We are taught that we must welcome the stranger living in our lands because we were once strangers in a strange land, to speak truth to power and to demand that justice roll down like a mighty stream. The Jewish people have seen this before and we will not be quiet in the face of something that goes against what we are taught,” said Rabbi Sydney Mintz of Congregation Emmanu-El in San Francisco and Bend the Arc Bay Area board member.

More than a dozen organizations representing thousands of Bay Area residents support today’s event. By including religious, legal, and medical leaders and national advocacy groups, today’s event presents a united front against this callous practice and in support of the institutions critical to the defense of our republic.

“Child separation and the ensuing abuses are a crime against humanity and a serious blow to due process and democratic governance. This policy has created an unprecedented Constitutional crises that must be addressed, but worse it has fostered an incredibly cruel and unhealthy environment for these families,” said Mary Kelly Persyn, child advocate, attorney, co-lead for Lawyer Moms of America - California and event organizer.

Today’s speakers will include, in alphabetical order:

Ellen Clark-King, Executive Pastor and Canon for Social Justice, Grace Cathedral
Dr. Lucy Crain, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, Emerita, UCSF
Dr. Raul Gutierrez, Co-Lead, Pediatric Clinic San Francisco General Hospital
Jesse Hahnel, Executive Director, The National Center for Youth Law
Matt Haney, Commissioner, San Francisco Board of Education
Mary Kelly Persyn, Lawyer Moms of America
Brittney Rezaei, Immigrants Rights Attorney, CAIR - California



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A partial list of supporting organizations includes:

American Academy of Pediatrics -- California
American Constitution Society -- Bay Area Chapter
Bend the Arc
CAIR -- California
California Campaign to Counter Childhood Adversity
Centro Legal de la Raza
Children Now
Congregation Emanu-El
Grace Cathedral
HIAS
Lawyer Moms of America
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area
Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church
National Center for Youth Law
San Francisco La Raza Lawyers' Association
The Justice & Diversity Center of The Bar Association of San Francisco
The Kitchen
University of San Francisco Law School Immigration and Deportation Defense Clinic

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The Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) of the Bar Association of San Francisco 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.