

## **DRAFT SUPPORT LETTER – Keep Families Together Act**

Date:

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
The Honorable Kamala Harris  
The Honorable Jimmy Panetta

Dear :

I am writing today on behalf of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors to express our support for the Keep Families Together Act (S. 292/H.R. 541). We greatly appreciate your cosponsoring this important legislation.

As you know, the Trump administration implemented a “zero tolerance policy” that resulted in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) systematically separating children from their families who presented themselves at the U.S. southern border. The act of separating children from their family is reprehensible, even more so when these families are turning themselves in to border officials asking for humanitarian protection. We should not be punishing families seeking protection in our country by tearing families apart. Family separation causes emotional and psychological damage and makes it harder for families to present their case for legal protection. Likewise, detaining children for a long period of time alongside their family members is also not a solution to this family separation crisis – it is harmful, traumatic, and impedes due process.

The Keep Families Together Act would end this shameful policy by prohibiting Department of Homeland Security officials from separating children from their parents at or near the border, except in extraordinary circumstances. The bill would also limit criminal prosecutions for asylum seekers, increase child welfare training for CBP officials, establish a public policy preference for family reunification, and require the Department of Homeland Security to develop policies and procedures allowing parents and children to locate each other and reunite if they have been separated.

The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution last year condemning the Trump administration’s family separation policy and supporting the policies embodied in the Keep Families Together Act. We thank you for your support for this important legislation and for your efforts to establish a more just and humane immigration system for our country.

Sincerely,

John M. Phillips  
Chair, Board of Supervisors