

TAMMY BALDWIN  
WISCONSIN

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4906

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMERCE  
HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

September 14, 2018

Mr. James Owczarski  
Clerk  
City of Milwaukee  
200 East Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

CITY OF MILWAUKEE  
2018 OCT 15 P 3:04  
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Dear Mr. Owczarski:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the separation of immigrant families at our southern border. I appreciate you sharing the Milwaukee Common Council's resolution on this issue with me.

I share your concerns about the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy for immigrants crossing our southern border, which has resulted in the separation of thousands of children from their parents. Tearing families apart and traumatizing children in the name of immigration enforcement is wrong and immoral. I am also concerned about reports that children may have been subject to abuse while in custody and that immigrant detainees are not being treated with the level of dignity that every human being deserves. When illegal immigration occurs, it is paramount that those who are apprehended for entering our country unlawfully are treated humanely and are not deported without due process.

The Trump Administration created the family separation policy and had the power to end it. However, I believe Congress should also act to unequivocally bar the practice of separating immigrant families and ensure children and parents are kept together and treated humanely throughout any immigration custody. Furthermore, I am disappointed that President Trump's June 20 executive order, which took steps toward ending the family separation policy, did not include any directive to reunite families that have already been separated, and it could result in the long-term detention of entire families, including children. That is why I have joined legislation to end the President's family separation policy: the Keep Families Together Act (S. 3036), introduced by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). The bill would restore a humane approach that respects individuals seeking asylum in our country and ensures children and parents are not separated at our border. I hope that Congress acts quickly to pass the Keep Families Together Act.

I am continuing to hold the administration accountable for its efforts to reunite families. I am disappointed that hundreds of children remain separated from their parents and by reports that

some parents may have been deported without being asked if they wished to be reunited with their child. I have also heard from thousands of Wisconsinites expressing their concerns about the children's safety. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for caring for separated children. ORR has shelters across the country for migrant children who have been separated from their parents, as well as children who arrive at the border unaccompanied.

I share your concerns about the welfare of children in ORR's care, and I am working to ensure that ORR has the resources necessary to properly care for children in its custody and to reunite children with their parents as efficiently as possible. Additionally, as a member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), I led my colleagues in sending a letter to HELP Committee leadership requesting that the committee hold an oversight hearing on HHS's efforts to reunite families. You can read the full letter here:

<https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/HELP-Family-Reunification-Hearing.pdf>

As a United States Senator, part of my role is oversight of the actions of federal agencies. Please be assured, your thoughts will inform my views as I continue to monitor Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and HHS to ensure they are respecting the rights of the children and families who seek to enter our country. I will also continue to work to ensure that separated families are soon reunited.

Once again, thank you for contacting my office. It is important for me to hear from the people of Wisconsin on the issues, thoughts and concerns that matter most to you. If I can be of further assistance, please visit my website at <http://www.baldwin.senate.gov> for information on how to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

TB/ rk