

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 10, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to express our opposition to the Administration's detention of families and children in Texas, and its consideration of plans to hold families on military bases.<sup>1</sup> The last Administration rightfully ended the use of family detention because it is well-documented that detaining children, regardless of the length of detention, causes lasting harm, and yet does nothing to deter migration.<sup>2</sup> We strongly urge you reconsider this cruel action.

The harm of detaining children is clear: According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "there is no evidence that any amount of time in detention is 'safe' for children. In fact, even short periods of detention can cause psychological trauma and long-term mental health risks for children."<sup>3</sup> In addition, incarceration hinders normal child development, disrupts family roles and dynamics, and undermines a parent's authority and ability to address their children's needs.<sup>4</sup> When children witness their parents being treated poorly by detention staff or sense their helplessness in detention, it undermines a child's sense that their parent is an authority figure who can provide security and protection.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Camilo Montoya-Galvez, *Trump Revives Practice of Detaining Migrant Families with Children*, CBS NEWS (Mar. 6, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-revives-practice-of-detaining-migrant-families-with-children/>; Zolan Kanno Youngs, Hamed Aleaziz, Eric Schmitt, *Trump Plans to Use Military Sites Across the Country to Detain Undocumented Immigrants*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/21/us/politics/migrants-military-sites.html>.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Sarah Mares & Anna Ziersch, *How immigration detention harms children: A conceptual framework to inform policy and practice*, PSYCHOL. TRAUMA (Apr. 18, 2024), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38635209/>; Shela Sridar, et al., *Child Migrants in Family Immigration Detention in the US: An Examination of Current Pediatric Care Standards and Practices*, FXB CENTER FOR HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY; MGH ASYLUM CLINIC AT THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL HEALTH (2023), <https://globalhealth.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Child-Migrants-in-Family-Immigration-Detention-in-the-US.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Devin Miller, *Pediatricians speak out: Detention is not the answer to family separation*, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (Jul. 24, 2018) <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/12792>.

<sup>4</sup> Julie M. Linton, Marsha Griffin, et al., *Detention of Immigrant Children*, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (May 1, 2017), <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/139/5/e20170483/38727/Detention-of-Immigrant-Children>; Declaration of Luis H. Zayas, Dean of School of Social Work, University of Texas, Austin, (Dec. 10, 2014) [https://chu.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/chu-evo.house.gov/files/documents/Declaration%20of%20Luis%20Zayas\\_0.pdf](https://chu.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/chu-evo.house.gov/files/documents/Declaration%20of%20Luis%20Zayas_0.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Declaration, *supra* note 4 at 15.

Family detention has proven to be ineffective in deterring migration<sup>6</sup> and is unnecessary given the existence of effective alternatives. Case management programs have an established record of ensuring compliance with immigration obligations while allowing families to remain in communities. For example, the Family Case Management Program (FCMP) used case managers to ensure families comply with immigration obligations without relying on costly and harmful immigration detention. The program produced a 99 percent compliance rate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and immigration court requirements.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, FCMP cost only \$36 per day per family compared to family detention, which cost \$319 per person per day in 2019.<sup>8</sup> The FCMP demonstrated that when individuals are provided with clear assistance to navigate the immigration system, they follow through on their obligations.

As the Administration has increased detention of undocumented immigrants, it has become clear that the costs and logistics of some of these plans are wasteful and too difficult to implement.<sup>9</sup> Reviving family detention will not make America safer, nor will it generate efficiency within the government, but will instead deprive the administration of detention space it could otherwise use for individuals who pose a public safety threat. Multiple administrations have tried to use family detention, only to find it does nothing to prevent families from seeking safety here and instead serves only to traumatize new generations of children.

We urge you not to reimplement this failed policy of cruelly detaining families and to instead consider proven alternatives to detention when necessary.

Sincerely,

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<sup>6</sup> Tal Kopan, *Exclusive: Trump admin thought family separations would deter immigrants. They haven't.*, CNN (Jun. 18, 2018), <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/18/politics/family-separation-deterrence-dhs/index.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Katharina Obser, *The Family Case Management Program: Why Case Management Can and Must Be Part of the US Approach to Immigration*, WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION (Jun. 13, 2019), <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Family-Case-Management-Program.pdf>.

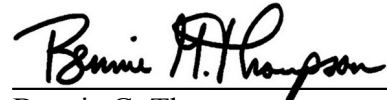
<sup>8</sup> Matthew La Corte, *Restore the Family Case Management Program for Asylum Seekers*, NISKANEN CENTER (Apr. 17, 2019), <https://www.niskanencenter.org/restore-the-family-case-management-program-for-asylum-seekers>.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g. Courtney Kube, et. al., *Trump administration rethinking Guantánamo immigrant detention plan amid cost issues and power struggles*, NBC NEWS (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/trump-admin-rethinking-guantanamo-immigrant-detention-plan-rcna194274>.



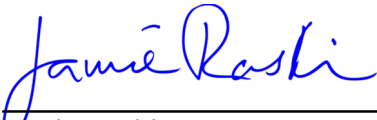
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Pramila Jayapal  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on  
Immigration Integrity,  
Security, and Enforcement



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Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Homeland Security



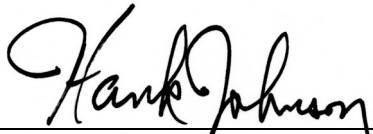
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Jamie Raskin  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on the  
Judiciary



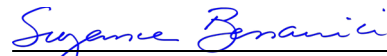
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Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress



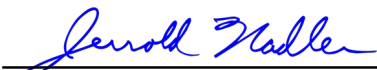
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
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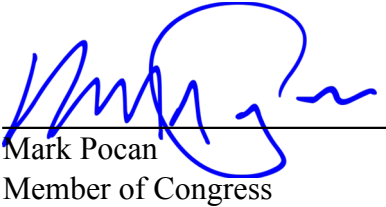
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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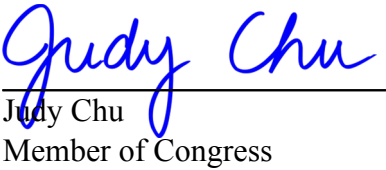
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Mark Pocan  
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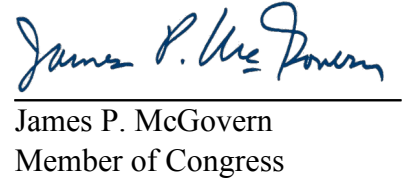
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Greg Casar  
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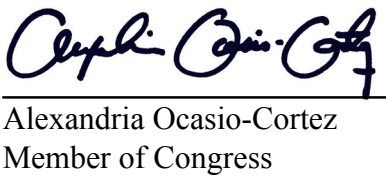
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Judy Chu  
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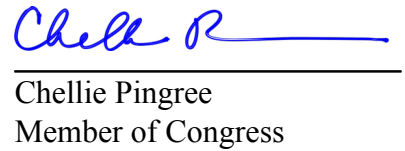
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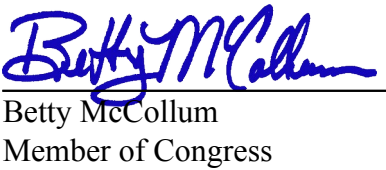
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
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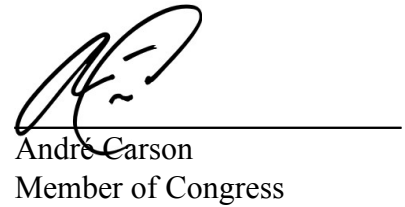
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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



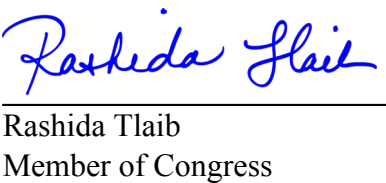
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Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



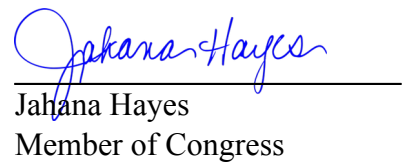
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Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



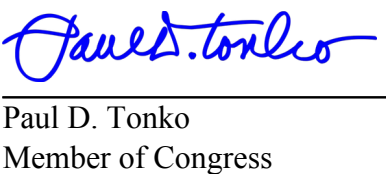
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Rashida Tlaib  
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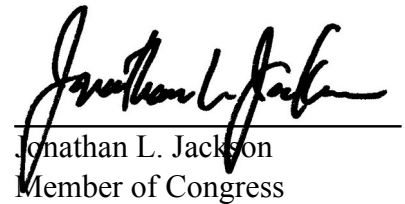
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Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress



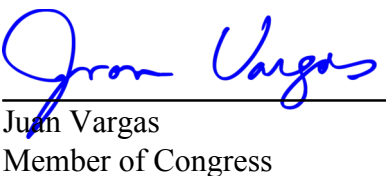
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Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



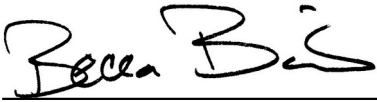
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Juan Vargas  
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Jim Tokuda  
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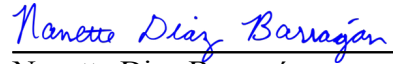
Becca Balint  
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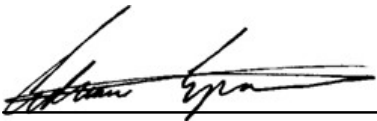
Summer L. Lee  
Member of Congress



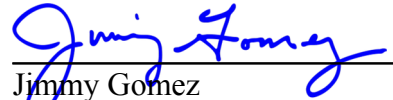
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Nanette Diaz Barragan  
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Adriano Espaillat  
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Jimmy Gomez  
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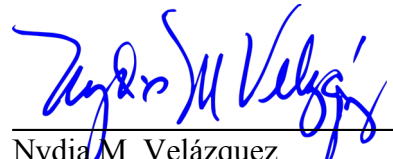
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Diana DeGette  
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Mary Gay Scanlon  
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Nydia M. Velázquez  
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Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



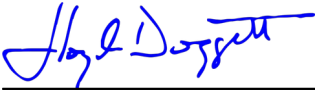
Ro Khanna  
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Dan Goldman  
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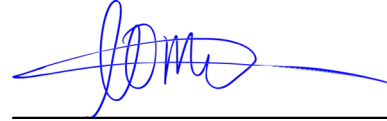


Frederica S. Wilson  
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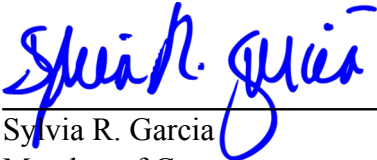
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Lloyd Doggett  
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Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



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Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Madeleine Dean  
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Gerald E. Connolly  
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Julia Brownley  
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Dwight Evans  
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Mike Quigley  
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David Scott  
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Andrea Salinas  
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Mark DeSaulnier  
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Bonnie Watson Coleman  
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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



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Zoe Lofgren  
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*Mark Takano*

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MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress

*Jesús G. García*

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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
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*Jasmine Crockett*

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*Adam Smith*

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Member of Congress

*Jennifer L. McClellan*

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*Val Hoyle*

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*Brittany Petersen*

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*Frank Pallone, Jr.*

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*Maxwell Frost*

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Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress

*Yvette D. Clarke*

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*Ted W. Lieu*

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*LaMonica McIver*

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Member of Congress

*Robin L. Kelly*

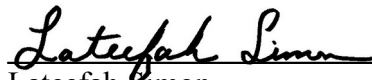
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Kevin Mullin  
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Lateefah Simon  
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Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



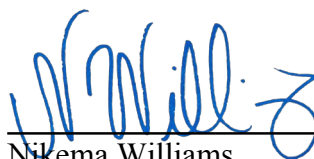
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Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



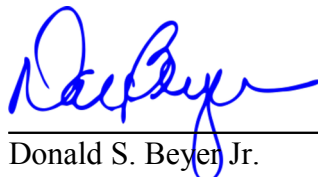
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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



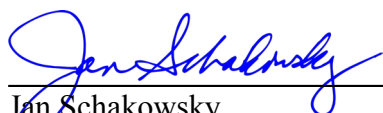
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



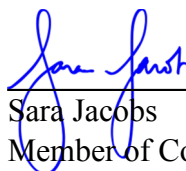
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Robert Garcia  
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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress




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Robert J. Menendez  
Member of Congress



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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



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Gregory W. Meeks  
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Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress





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Al Green  
Member of Congress



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J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress



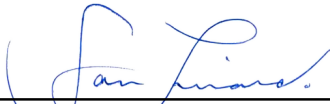
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Teresa Leger Fernández  
Member of Congress



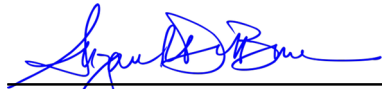
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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress



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Sam T. Liccardo  
Member of Congress



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Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



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Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



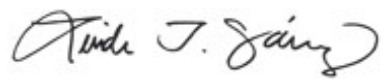
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



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Kelly Morrison  
Member of Congress



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Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress



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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress



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Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress

CC: Kristi Noem, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security