



KANSAS CHAPTER

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

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June 26, 2018

Name

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Washington, DC xxxxx

Senator Name:

The Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics represents 90% of the practicing pediatricians in our state. We are writing in protest of the lack of a solution in the immigration problem as it affects children and the administration's recent policy of family separation at the United States border. This has been a top priority for pediatricians since early 2017 when we observed children being sent to detention centers and a family separation policy was first being considered. After the separation policy was implemented, we supported our national organization's tireless efforts bring the plight of these children to the public's attention. We are happy to see that separation of children from their families at the border has finally stopped. However, since May more than 2,300 children have been removed from their parents. Some of these children have been sent to our state. The current executive order does not address reunification of these children with their families. More needs to be done.

As pediatricians, we are concerned with the health effects on children of being held in detention centers. These facilities have been shown to have a negative effect on both the children and their parents. These negative effects, known as "toxic stress", can lead to not only emotional and brain related disorders but also serious future physical conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. This only worsens in those children separated from their parent or trusted guardian.

The American Academy of Pediatrics in 2017 produced a policy document, *Detention of Immigrant Children*, that addresses our concerns and provides recommendations for the mitigation of these adverse effects. For children being held in detention we strongly advised that the policy recommendations provided by the AAP in this statement be followed. But this does not solve the problem.

We strongly urge you to work with your colleagues from both parties in Congress to solve the issue of immigration. Parents will continue to seek a safe place for their children, as is only natural. We need compassion when deciding on their fates. Solutions need to consider the effects on children both short term and in the future.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Mellick, MD, FAAP

President, Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics