

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.¹ 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.² 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."³ 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.⁴ 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.⁵

¹ 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>.

² 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>.

³ 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>.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Declaration, *supra* note 4 at 15.

Family detention has proven to be ineffective in deterring migration⁶ 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.⁷ Moreover, FCMP cost only \$36 per day per family compared to family detention, which cost \$319 per person per day in 2019.⁸ 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.⁹ 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,

⁶ 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>.

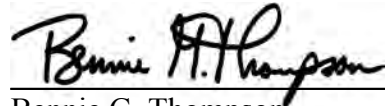
⁷ Katharina Obser, *The Family Case Management Program: Why Case Management Can and Must Be Part of the US Approach to Immigration*, WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION (Jun. 13, 2019), <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Family-Case-Management-Program.pdf>.

⁸ 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>.

⁹ 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>.



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



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



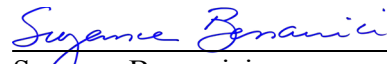
Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
House Committee on the
Judiciary



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



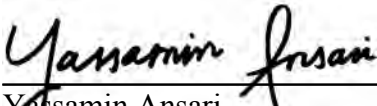
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



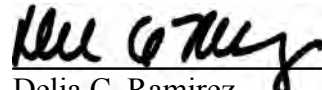
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



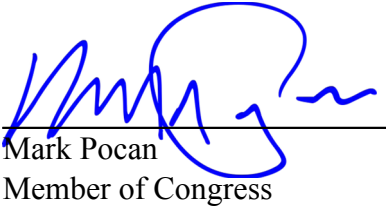
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



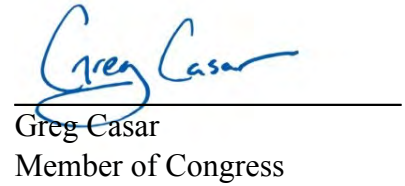
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



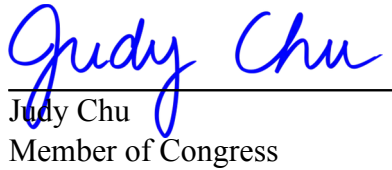
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



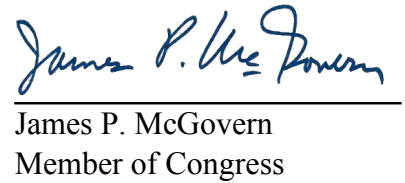
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



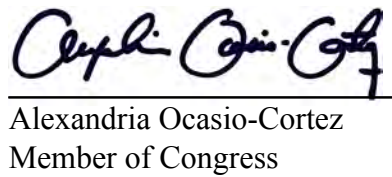
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



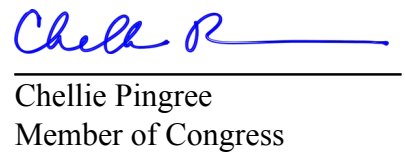
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



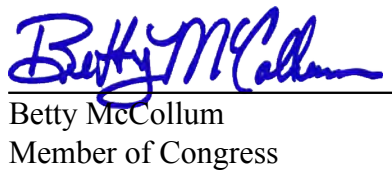
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



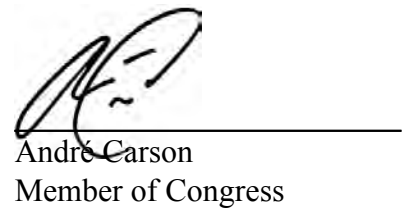
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



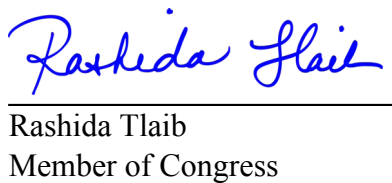
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



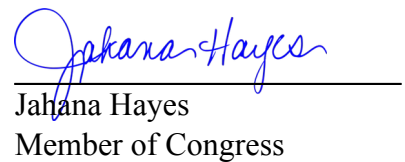
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



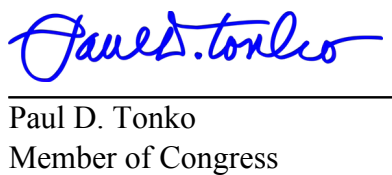
André Carson
Member of Congress



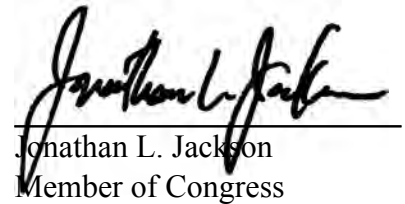
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



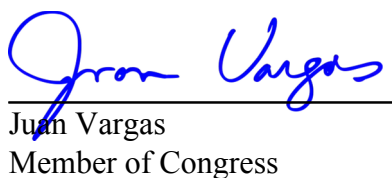
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



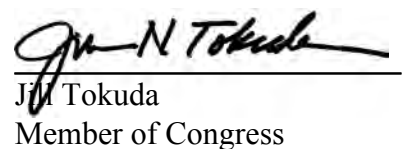
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



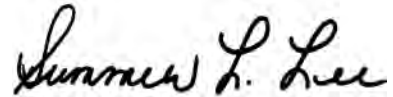
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



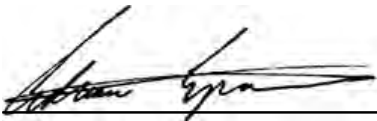
Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



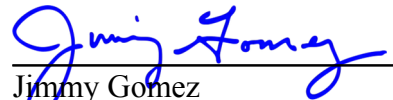
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



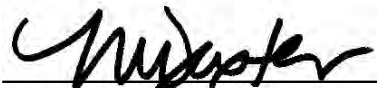
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



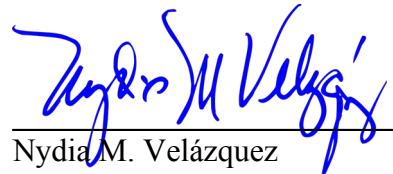
Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



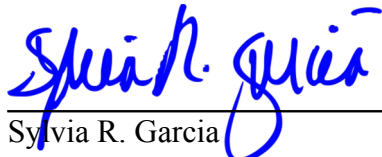
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



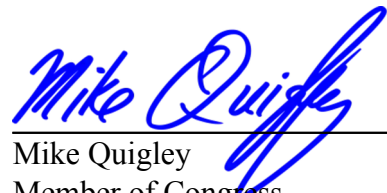
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



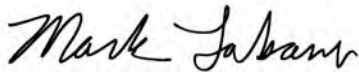
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



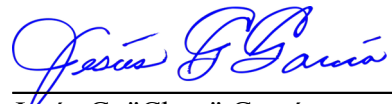
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



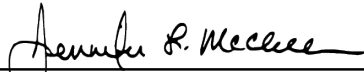
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



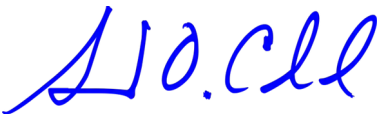
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



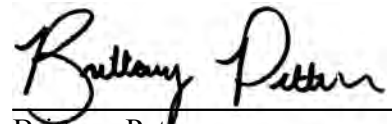
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



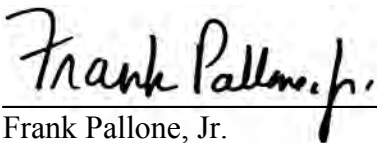
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



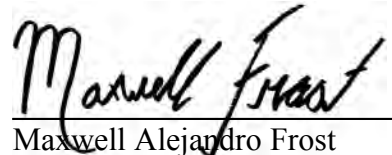
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Brittany Petersen
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



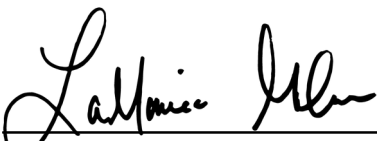
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



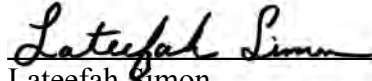
LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



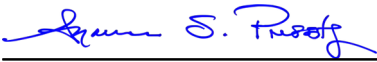
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



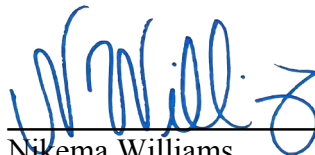
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



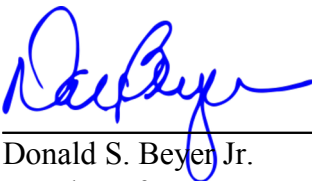
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



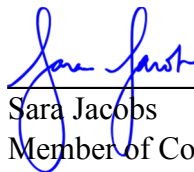
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



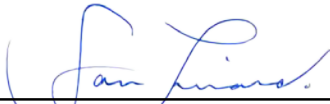
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



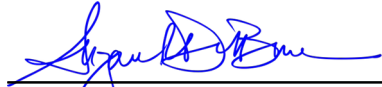
Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Sam T. Liccardo
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



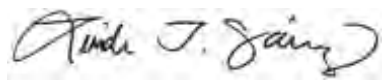
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



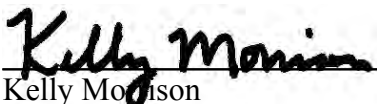
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



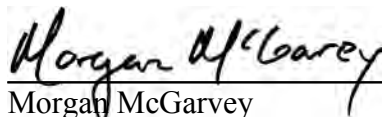
Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

CC: Kristi Noem, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security