

Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, Board Member

SUBJECT: SEPARATION OF FAMILIES

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED, AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

Recent enforcement of United States immigration policy, featuring a 'zero tolerance' initiative, are making national and global headlines as parents and guardians crossing the border are separated from their children during their imprisonment. The children, who do not face charges, are removed from the care of their family and taken into federal custody. According to the Department of Homeland Security, nearly 2,000 children were separated from their families during April and May.

Images and audio of distraught children, including babies and toddlers, forcibly removed from their parents has brought to question the well-being of these minors. While these children are detained in federally approved centers, shelters and facilities across the nation, conditions at many have been reported as less than optimal, adding to their traumatic experience. This policy, causing forced family separation, has been condemned as inhumane and harmful by organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychological Association (APA). According to the APA, the policy "threatens the mental and physical health of both the children and their caregivers." Other experts in the field of psychiatry and social work cite the long-term consequences of this practice upon the children as: creating acute distress, harming the child's ability to cope and self-soothe, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Further, research suggests that the parts of the brain that manage fear responses develop differently in children who have undergone traumatic experiences and can hurt their educational outcomes, sense of well-being and create behavioral problems when they begin or continue their educational programming.

Numerous organizations report that these actions appear to violate tenets under the Basic Rights of the Child and stand alongside a cross-section of faith based leaders and a growing number of notable lawmakers who have spoken in opposition of the practice.

Across the aisle, legislators, lawmakers, and elected officials, including members of our own Congressional delegation, are denouncing the separation of these families as cruel and unconscionable. Both Republican and Democrat lawmakers are considering legislation that would keep these families together, provide additional judges so detained families can face shorter waiting periods, and provide facilities for families to stay in, to name a few.

This item seeks to establish consensus amongst The School Board of Miami-Dade County in encouraging lawmakers to work towards a swift and humane resolution that seeks to end the separation of families under the 'zero tolerance' initiative and ensure the well-being of children and families. Further, it authorizes the Superintendent's transmittal of Resolution 18-044 to Congressional Members representing Miami-Dade County.

This item does not appear on the published agenda. Good cause exists to vary from the published agenda as this urgent matter arose after the publication of the Agenda and in order to timely indicate the Board's support for lawmakers and members of our Congressional delegation who are urgently advocating and working towards a resolution to end the inhumane practice of family separation.

This item has been reviewed and approved by the School Board Attorney's Office as to form and legal sufficiency.

**ACTION PROPOSED
BY DR. LAWRENCE S. FELDMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution 18-044 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, encouraging lawmakers to work towards a swift and humane resolution that seeks to end the separation of families under the 'zero tolerance' initiative and ensure the well-being of children and families; and authorize the Superintendent's transmittal of Resolution 18-044 to Congressional Members representing Miami-Dade County.

RESOLUTION NO. 18-044
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
ENCOURAGING LAWMAKERS TO WORK TOWARDS A SWIFT AND HUMANE
RESOLUTION THAT SEEKS TO END THE SEPARATION OF FAMILIES UNDER THE 'ZERO
TOLERANCE INITIATIVE' AND ENSURE THE
WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

WHEREAS, recent enforcement of United States immigration policy, featuring a 'zero tolerance' initiative, are making national and global headlines as parents and guardians crossing the border are separated from their children during their imprisonment. The children, who do not face charges, are removed from the care of their family and taken into federal custody. According to the Department of Homeland Security, nearly 2,000 children were separated from their families during April and May; and

WHEREAS, images and audio of distraught children, including babies and toddlers, forcibly removed from their parents has brought to question the well-being of these minors. While these children are detained in federally approved centers, shelters and facilities across the nation, conditions at many have been reported as less than optimal, adding to their traumatic experience. This policy, causing forced family separation, has been condemned as inhumane and harmful by organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychological Association (APA); and

WHEREAS, according to the APA, the policy "threatens the mental and physical health of both the children and their caregivers." Other experts in the field of psychiatry and social work cite the long-term consequences of this practice upon the children as: creating acute distress, harming the child's ability to cope and self-soothe, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder; and

WHEREAS, research suggests that the parts of the brain that manage fear responses develop differently in children who have undergone traumatic experiences and can hurt their educational outcomes, sense of well-being and create behavioral problems when they begin or continue their educational programming; and

WHEREAS, across the aisle, legislators, lawmakers, and elected officials, including members of our own Congressional delegation, are denouncing the separation of these families as cruel and unconscionable. Both Republican and Democrat lawmakers are considering legislation that would keep these families together, provide additional judges so detained families can face shorter waiting periods, and provide facilities for families to stay in, to name a few.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution No. 18-044 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, encouraging lawmakers to work towards a swift and humane resolution that seeks to end the separation of families under the 'zero tolerance' initiative to ensure the well-being of children and families.

A copy of this resolution is placed in the permanent records of this Board.

Presented this twentieth day of June, A.D. 2018

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:

Secretary

