

July 18, 2019

Dear Texas State and Federal leaders,

As individuals and organizations dedicated to improving the lives of women and children in Texas, we are writing to express our deep concern over the reported treatment of parents and children held in immigration detention facilities on Texas soil.

We applaud recent legislation that provides significant humanitarian aid to improve the living conditions of child migrants in the care of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The money cannot come soon enough. Numerous accounts by Republican and Democratic elected officials, lawyers, health professionals, and Border Patrol agents indicate that many migrants are living in overcrowded conditions without access to sufficient food, clean water, clean clothing, bathing facilities or appropriate bedding and protection from the elements. Moreover, many migrants have not received needed medical or mental health treatment or have been separated from their families. For migrant children, many of whom are infants and toddlers, poor living conditions have impaired their physical and mental health. Several children have died while in federal detention facilities. Furthermore, early childhood trauma undermines a child's healthy brain development and ability to form healthy attachments, resulting in lifelong, negative consequences, such as chronic physical and/or mental illness and less likelihood of succeeding in school or becoming productive workers.

We urge you to support additional measures to ensure that all children and parents who are in the care of the federal government, no matter their country of origin, receive compassionate, humane, and fair treatment. Migrant children who are in U.S. custody awaiting review of their asylum requests should reside in safe and clean environments with their parents, relatives or sponsors. During any brief stays in border or detention facilities, children should have access to sufficient food, clean water, beds, clean clothes, soap, and other necessities, in addition to recreation, health care and educational services.

It is critical that our federal and state leaders work expeditiously to ensure that all migrant children and families who are crossing our border for their safety and survival are treated with human dignity and care. We believe that you share our concern and will actively work to make this goal a reality.

Signed,

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