

**RPC 2018-013**  
**Supporting “Keep Families Together” Senate Bill 3036**

WHEREAS the Trump administration recently implemented a coercive, illegal zero tolerance policy which resulted in over 2,342 children separated from their parents at the Mexican border from May 5, when the zero tolerance policy went into effect, through June 9 (US Border statistics);

WHEREAS in both cases the children were turned over to the Department of Health and Human Services and Office of Refugee Resettlement, and migrants without required papers were arrested, and their children reclassified as unaccompanied minors, (Slate, 6/15/2018), (Vox, 6/19/2018) and they were then imprisoned in what amounts to chain link cages, then put in foster homes or placed in the care of relatives, and there was no clear plan for reuniting them and that is still the case, and furthermore, parents were and still are being deported while their children remain in the US;

WHEREAS despite the administration’s claim that the separation of children from parents was done lawfully, this was not the case as it was this administration’s choice, the separation was in violation of the Flores Settlement, which came out of *Flores v Reno* (1997), setting national standards for the treatment of minors taken into custody by DHH or ORR, and requiring the government to release children in a timely manner, preferably to parents, and requiring the least restrictive setting (Human Rights First, 02/29.2016: The Flores Settlement: A Brief History and Next Steps);

WHEREAS members of Congress and reporters have visited the detention centers, finding overcrowding conditions and understaffing, there have been reports of inappropriate discipline, inadequate medical care, and lack of needed supervision (NYT, 06/14/2018), human rights organizations, experts, and mental health groups (including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the U.N. Human Rights office) all concur that separating children from parents is a morally and ethically reprehensible act with documented lasting trauma and other psychological effects on children (Business Insider, June 16 2018);

WHEREAS on June 20, 2018, President Trump signed an executive order that reversed his policy of separating children from their parents at the border, and ordering a “temporary detention policy for all families entering this country illegally”, and also seeking a modification of the Flores Settlement to allow for detainment of families for the time it takes to complete their hearings (20 days is the maximum time set under Flores) text of order from Market Watch, 6/20/2018); and

WHEREAS this order fails to protect migrants, asylum seekers, families and children as it seeks to enable the detainment of families until any legal proceedings are complete, which could be years with the request for a modification to the Flores Settlement, and the new policy in effect jails families, many seeking asylum from violent, dangerous situations and it does not lay out a plan to reunite families;

THEREFORE the Washington County Democratic Central Committee (WCDCC) of Oregon resolves as follows:

1. The WCDCC supports Senate Bill 3036, The Keep Families Together Act, and the House companion bill, HR 6135, which prevents border agents from removing children from parents except for certain extenuating circumstances (child is in danger of abuse or neglect, child trafficking) within a 100 miles from a US border, and which requires training of border agents to enable them to act within the best interest of the child, and we oppose the zero tolerance policy;
2. The WCDCC sees the executive order to end the family separation as inadequate and disturbing, and opposes the executive order’s provision for what could become years of incarceration for families, its lack of provision for a timely reunification of families, and its vague wording which leaves room for family separation if there is determined to be a lack of resources to keep families together; the WCDCC calls for legislation that will prevent this incarceration and opposes any modification of the Flores Settlement, and also demands that an immediate effort be made to reunite families, in compliance with US District Judge Dana Sabraw’s order of June 27, 2018;

3. The WCDCC recognizes and would like thank Senator Merkley, Senator Wyden, and Representative Bonamici for the contribution and leadership they provided to end the family separation policy and their efforts to end the zero tolerance, and their co-sponsorship of the Senate and House Keep Families Together legislation, and we would also like to recognize Senator Merkley for his trips to the border and his successful efforts to bring awareness about what is happening to families at the border;

4. The WCDCC, in agreement with Article 7 - Immigration of the 2018 Democratic Party of Oregon Platform, particularly Planks 2, 4, 9, 10 and 11 supports comprehensive immigration reform which recognizes the humanity and dignity of those seeking asylum and all migrants, works to keep families together, and guarantees each person the due process guaranteed under law; and

5. We direct that copies of this resolution be sent to all the entire Oregon Congressional delegation, Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, and Oregon Governor Kate Brown, and note that this resolution has been submitted to the DPO for consideration at their 3rd Quarterly meeting in August.

*Resolution submitted by Lisa Stiller and Patrick Maguire, R&PC Members – July 3, 2018*

*Approved by R&PC – July 3, 2018*

*Adopted by WCDCC – July 25, 2018*