



Homeland Security

July 19, 2018

Ms. Donna McKay
Executive Director
Physicians for Human Rights
256 West 38th Street
New York, New York 10018

Dear Ms. McKay:

Thank you for your June 14, 2018 letter.

I have reviewed your concerns about the Administration's zero-tolerance efforts and cases of family separation that have resulted from the prosecution of ~~illegal border crossers~~. The purpose of zero-tolerance is to ~~refer for prosecution all amenable adults who illegally enter the United States in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1325(a)~~. Our policy has been to enforce this law prohibiting illegal entry by prosecuting those who violate the law, ~~not~~ by deliberately separating families. I want to ~~reiterate~~ that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has never had a blanket policy of separating families at the border. But like any American arrested and charged with a crime, illegal aliens who violate our laws are not accompanied by their families into the criminal justice system.

asylum seekers and other migrants

ignore the fact that seeking asylum is completely legal.

On June 20, 2018, President Trump signed an Executive Order that directs the Administration to continue to protect the border and to prosecute "illegal crossers," while simultaneously avoiding the ~~separation~~ of families to the extent we can legally do so. As expressed in the Executive Order, it is the policy of this Administration to maintain family unity, including by detaining alien families together where appropriate and consistent with the law and available resources. A permanent fix, however, is the responsibility of Congress, which must act to ensure DHS can keep families together throughout the course of their immigration proceedings and to eliminate loopholes that incentivize criminals, smugglers, and other nefarious actors from exploiting our immigration system to enter the United States illegally.

also known as human beings

I would like to formally pass the buck to

The Department is continuing to examine these issues in light of ongoing litigation and recent court decisions. Please share this response with the cosigners of your letter. Thank you again for your letter and your interest in this important issue.

allow families and children seeking safe haven to apply

more than 20,000

Best Regards,

Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary

you got it, Secretary Nielsen!
we are watching your actions as medical professionals and will do everything in our power to hold you accountable.

everyone, whether or not they

reunification

in jail

protections