

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
H-310, United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin Yoder
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
2006 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Frelinghuysen, Culberson, Cole, and Yoder:

In recent days, we have witnessed heartbreaking images of children separated from their families as a result of the Trump administration's family separation policy. These images have shocked the conscience of Americans on all sides of the political spectrum.

It is now obvious that family separation is not required by any federal law or regulation. Instead, the separation of more than 2,300 children from their families is the direct result of President Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions' "zero tolerance" policy of prosecuting all border crossers — including families who may have valid asylum claims and families who have turned themselves in voluntarily.

Further, after making statements directing asylum seekers to enter the country through ports of entry, there have been confirmed reports of U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers denying entry to asylum seekers, citing a limitation on processing capacity.

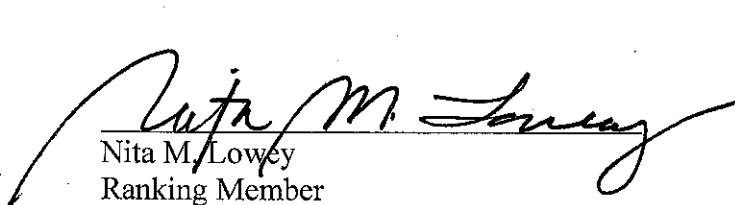
While we have been heartened that several prominent Republicans have criticized the Trump administration's approach to family separation, it is time for action. Instead of blithely deferring to the Trump administration or issuing empty condemnations, Congress should exercise its Constitutional prerogatives and conduct rigorous oversight of this cruel policy.

As you know, the Appropriations Committee has a unique role in providing resources for the Department of Homeland Security, which detains asylum seekers, the Department of Justice, which is executing the Trump-Sessions prosecutions of asylum seekers, and the Department of Health and Human Services, which cares for the minor children who have been separated from their parents.

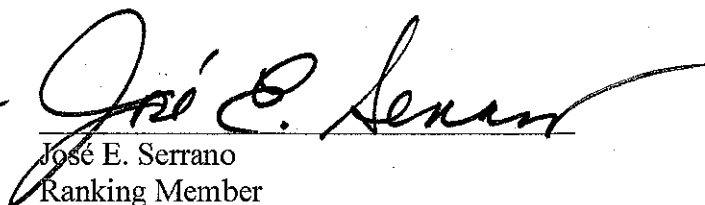
We urge you to immediately schedule a joint hearing to provide oversight on the use of federal funds for the Trump-Sessions policy of prosecuting asylum seekers and the resulting family separations, and to examine the impact on minor children who have been separated from their parents.

The ongoing separation of families and subsequent detention of minor children is immoral and unacceptable. It is time for Congress to act, beginning with a hearing on these critical issues. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



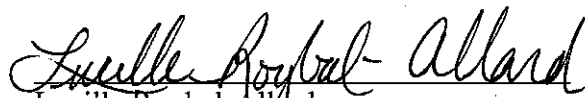
Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations



José E. Serrano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies



Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security