



PRESS RELEASE
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CONTACT: Mike Takada
Office: (773) 275-0097 ext. 230
Email mtakada@jasc-chicago.org

Japanese American Service Committee Statement on Forced Separation of Migrant Children and Indefinite Family Detention

The Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) strongly condemns the policies enacted by the Trump administration's "zero tolerance immigration policy" in April 2018, which have resulted in over 2,300 migrant children being forcibly separated from their parents and confined in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) managed prisons.

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Even further, though the Executive Order signed by President Trump on June 20, 2018 seeks to end his administration's family separation policy, in fact, this executive order has signaled the administration's willingness to detain immigrant families indefinitely, and leaves unanswered the timeline for the reuniting of parents with those children that have already been separated and detained.

For the Japanese American community, these policies bring up powerful memories of the violation of civil and human rights that they experienced during World War II. During this time, over 120,000 Japanese Americans, citizens and non-citizens alike, were forcibly dispossessed of their property and rights, and incarcerated under Executive Order 9066, signed by then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"Our community has made a point of stating that what we experienced during World War II should never happen again to any other community," stated Michael Takada, CEO of the JASC. "Yet this same violation of human and civil rights is happening again, with the segregation and detention of migrant children, far from their parents, with limited oversight and questionable standards of safety."

"The civil and human rights which are the bedrock of this country and of international law are most meaningful under times of strain," stated Takada. "For the Japanese American community, xenophobia, racism, and the failure of political leadership resulted in one of the most egregious violations of civil and human rights in 20th century America. Today similar factors are at play in 21st century America in the scapegoating and targeting of the most vulnerable members of society."

The JASC, which was founded in 1946 with the original purpose of helping Japanese Americans to resettle in Chicago after their release from the Japanese American concentration camps, is dedicated to promoting the lessons of Japanese American incarceration for all Americans. We call upon local communities in Chicago and Illinois to remember the lessons of the past and to end the forced separation of children and indefinite family detention.

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The JASC engages people of all ages to experience Japanese American history and culture and to improve their wellbeing through innovative, high quality programs and services tailored to the multicultural community.