

State of Vermont House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 2

SPECIAL SESSION

Joint resolution condemning the recently reversed federal policy of separating children from their families at the southern international border, expressing a profound hope that the family separation policy will not be reinstated, and imploring the Department of Homeland Security to reunite the separated families immediately

Offered by: Representatives Copeland-Hanzas of Bradford, Brumsted of Shelburne, Miller of Shaftsbury, Mrowicki of Putney, Till of Jericho, Webb of Shelburne, Yantachka of Charlotte, Ancel of Calais, Bartholomew of Hartland, Belaski of Windsor, Bissonnette of Winooski, Bock of Chester, Botzow of Pownal, Briglin of Thetford, Browning of Arlington, Buckholz of Hartford, Burke of Brattleboro, Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Christensen of Weathersfield, Christie of Hartford, Cina of Burlington, Colburn of Burlington, Conlon of Cornwall, Connor of Fairfield, Conquest of Newbury, Dakin of Colchester, Deen of Westminster, Donahue of Northfield, Donovan of Burlington, Dunn of Essex, Emmons of Springfield, Fagan of Rutland City, Fields of Bennington, Forguites of Springfield, Gannon of Wilmington, Gardner of Richmond, Giambatista of Essex, Gonzalez of Winooski, Grad of Moretown, Haas of Rochester, Head of South Burlington, Hill of Wolcott, Hooper of Montpelier, Hooper of Randolph, Houghton of Essex, Howard of Rutland City, Jessup of Middlesex, Jickling of Randolph, Johnson of South Hero, Joseph of North Hero, Keenan of St. Albans City, Kitzmiller of Montpelier, Krowinski of Burlington, Lanpher of Vergennes, Lippert of Hinesburg, Long of Newfane, Lucke of Hartford, Macaig of Williston, Masland of Thetford, McCormack of Burlington, McCullough of Williston, Morris of Bennington, Murphy of Fairfax, Noyes of Wolcott, Ode of Burlington, O'Sullivan of Burlington, Pajala of Londonderry, Partridge of Windham, Potter of Clarendon, Pugh of South Burlington, Rachelson of Burlington, Scheu of Middlebury, Sharpe of Bristol, Sheldon of Middlebury, Sibia of Dover, Squirrell of Underhill, Stevens of Waterbury, Stuart of Brattleboro, Sullivan of Dorset, Sullivan of Burlington, Toleno of Brattleboro, Toll of Danville, Townsend of South Burlington, Trieber of Rockingham, Troiano of Stannard, Weed of Enosburgh, Wood of Waterbury, Yacovone of Morristown, and Young of Glover

Whereas, on May 7, 2018, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that “the Department of Homeland Security is now referring 100 percent of illegal Southwest Border crossings to the Department of Justice for prosecution,”and

Whereas, the Attorney General continued, “If you are smuggling a child, then we will prosecute you and that child will be separated from you as required by law,” and

Whereas, until Wednesday, June 20, 2018, when the President issued an executive order reversing the federal policy of separating children from their families at the southern international border, the President had asserted that he was following existing law, but prior administrations had made exceptions to criminal detention for migrants entering the country illegally with children, and

Whereas, a spokeswoman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that “the use of immigration detention and family separation as a deterrent runs counter to human rights standards and principles,” and

Whereas, during the period from April 19, 2018 to May 31, 2018, the Department of Homeland Security separated 1,995 children from 1,940 adults, and

Whereas, separation from parents is an adverse childhood experience that can disrupt normal brain development and result in a lifetime of negative health outcomes, and

Whereas, the children have been sent to temporary facilities that U.S. Representative Peter Welch described as “nothing short of a prison,” and

Whereas, former first Lady Laura Bush wrote in the *Washington Post* that “the zero-tolerance policy is cruel... [and] immoral” and that the “images are eerily reminiscent of the Japanese American internment camps of World War II,” now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly condemns the recently reversed federal policy of separating children from their families at the southern international border, expresses a profound hope that the family separation policy will not be reinstated, and implores the Department of Homeland Security to reunite the separated families immediately, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to President Donald Trump, U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, and the Vermont Congressional Delegation.