



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** RES 18-1051, **Version:** 1

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Condemning separation of immigrant and refugee families and calling for the immediate end of the Trump administration's Zero-Tolerance Policy.

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul is a place where all are welcomed, where all families are valued, and where we recognize and cherish every child's right to health, happiness, comfort, and security; and

WHEREAS, immigrants and refugees have prospered, and contributed substantially to economic growth and revitalized neighborhoods in the City of Saint Paul; and

WHEREAS, since 2014, children and families have fled to the United States because of violence and gang activity in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras; and

WHEREAS, on April 6, 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions notified all United States Attorney's Offices of the Zero-Tolerance policy, which inhumanely detains all immigrant adults at the United States Boarder, without evidence in border-crossing offenses, regardless if they have children with them or not; and

WHEREAS, after the Zero-Tolerance policy was implemented, within 6 weeks, from April 18 to May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the Department of Homeland Security officials reported that 1,995 children, as young as 18 months, were taken from 1,940 adults of immigrants being prosecuted of illegal entry; and

WHEREAS, more inhumane separations of families legally seeking asylum are unaccounted for, reportedly the number of separated families at an official border crossing of legal asylum-seeking immigrants have not been included in the report from DHS; and

WHEREAS, under the Zero-Tolerance policy, children are traumatically and forcibly separated from their parents, immediately transported into detention in United States custody and denied parental contact, in different states than their parents, including Saint Paul, Minnesota, where children are being processed for indefinite stays throughout the foster care system; and

WHEREAS, Department of Health and Human Services shelters are at near full capacity, with the agency contemplating housing these children at military bases, and the average length of time spent in these shelters is up to 57 days this year; and

WHEREAS, organizations providing care for these children report signs of "separation trauma," inability to sleep, nightmares, crying, and begging for their parents as well as physical pain; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics emphasized separating children from their parents often causes irreparable harm to a child's health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, the proliferation of trauma and lifelong physical and mental health impacts on immigrant children creates a costly burden on our already over-burdened health care system; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement do not have a system to bring families back together and have deported parents without their children and children without their parents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul passed Resolution 15-2071, Supporting the State of Minnesota and the United States of America accepting and welcoming properly screened immigrants and refugees regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, country of origin; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul passed Resolution 15-2233, Condemning anti-Muslim, anti-refugee, and anti-immigrant speech from presidential candidate Donald Trump and others; and

WHEREAS, forcibly separating children from their families is against multiple international laws regarding treatment of persons, the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Minnesota, and the City of Saint Paul's legal and community standards for equity, equal justice, and inclusive community ; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge with shame, the cruel acts of racially based inhumanity, once perpetrated by our government, under unjust laws sanctioning slavery, including the robbing of African American children from their parents and sold into slavery, the stealth and mistreatment of Native American children from their Tribal Nations and parents to be forcibly assimilated into the majority culture at boarding schools, and during World War II, the separation and tearing apart of Japanese American families from their communities and their placement in internment camps; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City of Saint Paul stands with our immigrant community to condemn the forcible separation of immigrant and refugee families and the Trump administration's Zero-Tolerance policy; and be it further

RESOLVED, the Saint Paul City Council supports and urges the Minnesota U.S. delegation to put pressure on the Trump administration to immediately end the cruel and abusive separation of immigrant and refugee families, and using them to weaponize a political debate which violates our country's highest American values of humanity and compassion; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, in light of the Presidential executive order this afternoon to end this abusive policy of separation, that the Saint Paul City Council strongly urges the administration to immediately reunite families that have been separated during the tenure of this policy.