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THE JCRC OF GREATER WASHINGTON AND WASHINGTON BOARD OF RABBIS CONDEMN POLICY OF FORCIBLE SEPARATION OF FAMILIES

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington and the Washington Board of Rabbis are horrified by the Trump administration's treatment of children and families crossing our nation's southern border. We strongly condemn the forcible separation of families who are seeking a better life for their children as they flee violence and unrest. It is inhumane and cruel to separate children from their parents. These actions can damage these children psychologically and deeply affect the emotional well-being of their parents as well. This policy and the consequent practices it requires are fundamentally un-American.

If we are to live up to our nation's values, we must never forget that as a nation of immigrants we have a moral imperative to welcome other immigrants and to treat them with respect and kindness. While this is not the first instance we have failed to live up to those values, it is certainly among the cruelest. We reject the inflammatory and divisive rhetoric being used to justify the policy, which is clearly intended to generate groundless fear of immigrants and refugees.

The Torah instructs us that "You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9) Our own painful history as Jews, and of repeatedly fleeing persecution, makes us particularly sensitive to and compassionate for those who suffer similar fates and experiences. We must always remember that immigrants and refugees should be treated with compassion and dignity. We join a wide range of Jewish and other faith communities from all across the political and theological spectrum in calling on the administration to reunite these families and end this policy immediately.

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Greater Washington is the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community representing Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout DC, Maryland, and Virginia. The JCRC focuses on government relations, Israel advocacy, inter-group relations, and social justice.

The Washington Board of Rabbis (WBR) represents rabbis of the greater Washington DC area. The WBR is open to rabbis from all established movements of the American Jewish community.