



Protecting Migrant Rights Across Borders

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HELP Act Introduced to Protect Immigrant Parents and Children as Trump Administration Ramps Up Separation of Immigrant Families

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Senators Tina Smith (D-NM) and Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) introduced the [Humane Enforcement and Legal Protections \(HELP\) for Separated Children Act](#), legislation that protects children affected by immigration enforcement actions and recognizes parents' rights to make decisions for their children. This bill takes essential steps towards ensuring that enforcement practices do not inadvertently cause lasting harm to children or permanently sever family bonds without due process when a parent is apprehended, detained, or removed through immigration enforcement.

“Every parent, regardless of their immigration status, should have the right to make the best decisions for themselves and their children, full stop. And despite the recent actions of the Trump administration, that right does not end in immigrant detention or at the border. Too often, detained and deported parents are cut off from the courts, agencies, and information needed to remain part of their children’s lives,” **said Keeli Sorensen, Director of Policy and Government Affairs at Justice in Motion.** “The HELP Separated Children Act is a critical step towards codifying essential rights and liberties for parents and children who are being separated and traumatized every day.”

The provisions in the HELP Act ensure that parents can make care arrangements, maintain contact with their children, participate in family court and child welfare proceedings, and access necessary legal and consular support. The bill recognizes that parental rights do not end at the border, establishing a case-by-case pathway for deported parents to return temporarily to the United States for urgent family matters such as medical emergencies or family court hearings.

Importantly, the bill also directs agencies to consider the best interests of the child in all decisions affecting parental detention, reinforcing a child-centered approach across immigration enforcement. By requiring access to communication, documentation, and participation in proceedings, the bill advances portable justice: the principle that legal rights must remain enforceable regardless of where a person is located.

For all media inquiries, please contact media@justiceinmotion.org.

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[Justice in Motion](#) protects migrant rights by ensuring justice across borders. Our unique network of on-the-ground human rights defenders in Mexico and Central America partner with U.S. advocates to make sure that wherever migrants go, their rights will follow.