



NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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NIEA Resolution 2018- #5

TITLE: CONDEMNING THE FAMILY SEPARATION AT THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER AND URGING IMMEDIATE REUNIFICATION

WHEREAS, the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) was established in 1970 for the purpose of advocating, planning, and promoting the unique and special educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; and

WHEREAS, NIEA as the largest national Indian organization of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian educators, administrators, parents, and students in the United States, provides a forum to discuss and act upon issues affecting the education of Indian and Native people; and

WHEREAS, through its unique relationship with Indian nations and tribes, the federal government has established programs and resources to meet the educational needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, residing on and off their reserved or non-reserved homelands; and

WHEREAS, separating children from their families is not a new policy of the U.S. government. For nearly a century, American Indian and Alaska Native children were forcibly removed from their families and communities and sent to boarding schools by a policy known as the American Indian Family Separation policy; and

WHEREAS, forced separation was a strategy to eliminate Native culture and identity through the education of Native children in schools far away from their cultures, families, and communities; and

WHEREAS, Native communities experience multi-generational trauma caused by forced separation and attempted cultural genocide and deal with the ramifications of government policies that have led to endemic alcohol and drug abuse, incarceration rates 1.5x higher than white peers, and high rates of suicide among Native youth; and

WHEREAS, the UN defines “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” in no uncertain terms as genocide; and

WHEREAS, the current administration has enforced a “zero-tolerance” policy against immigrants, utilizing the historical U.S. strategy against Native peoples of forcible separation; and

WHEREAS, that zero-tolerance policy involves separating children, siblings, and parents at the U.S.-Mexico border for extended periods of time during immigration processing; and

WHEREAS, the forced, sudden, and unexplained separation of children was followed by the incarceration of distraught children within makeshift cages and shelters, with limited opportunity to contact their parents or

guardians, and virtually no educational opportunities from credentialed teachers which is the right of any child; and

WHEREAS, there are deeply upsetting reports of widespread physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of children, as well as forced injection of psychological drugs without parental consent in internment facilities; and

WHEREAS, the current administration altered its “zero tolerance” policy, promising to reunite the approximately 3,000 families separated; and

WHEREAS, the federal courts have ordered further expedited reunification of families after months of separation, yet hundreds of children remain separated from their families;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Indian Education Association strongly condemns any policy, strategy, or practice that would separate families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NIEA demands the current administration to not only immediately reunite the remaining children with their families, but also provide tailored trauma-care services to those impacted, because retroactively changing policy is not enough to correct for this unacceptable violation of human rights.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NIEA until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that the following resolution was duly considered and passed by the National Indian Education Association on October 13, 2018 at which a quorum of the membership was present.



Dr. Jolene Bowman
President