



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## SENATOR RIVERA CONDEMNS TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY TEARING MIGRANT FAMILIES APART

GUSTAVO RIVERA June 20, 2018

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(Bronx, NY) - State Senator Gustavo Rivera condemns the Trump administration's inhumane implementation of its "zero tolerance" immigration policy, which has forcibly separated migrant children from their families while they await immigration proceedings. Senator Rivera is also calling on New York State agencies to utilize their oversight authority over not-for-profit organizations operating in New York that have been contracted by the federal government to house children affected by this policy.

Today, the Trump administration signed an Executive Order claiming to end family separations. However, the administration still aims to continue its policy of criminally prosecuting anyone crossing the border and indefinitely detaining families at facilities. It has also neglected to announce a course of action for implementing reunification plans for the children they have already separated from their families.

In the last several weeks, it has been reported that approximately 100 or more of these separated migrant children have been placed in 10 private facilities designated for unaccompanied and refugee minors in New York State, including three in The Bronx. Echoing the public outcry and repudiation toward such an abhorrent policy, Senator Rivera

joined fellow New Yorkers in their support of Governor Cuomo's plan to file a lawsuit against the federal government over this policy.

"The reports of children being separated from their families immigrating to our country are distressing, unsettling, and maddening. The placement of approximately 100 separated children in New York State obliges us to elevate our responsibility to them by providing them with the care they deserve, and ultimately ensuring that they are reunified with their families," said State Senator Gustavo Rivera. "While bringing attention to this issue is certainly critical, I urge my colleagues in government, in the media, and members of the community to respect the privacy of children in such facilities. Separated children are enduring an already traumatizing and invasive experience and we must do everything we can to limit further anguish. We will continue working to ensure their health and safety."

Senator Rivera is also calling on the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to deploy inspectors and medical experts to these facilities to ensure the children are receiving adequate accommodations and developmentally appropriate services. OCFS should also assist these providers in identifying every resource possible to help the families in the process of reunification. To that effect, Senator Rivera and his staff have been in touch with state providers that may be housing separated children in their facilities and that generally hold contracts with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement to house unaccompanied minors.