

July 9, 2018

FACT Board of Trustees' statement on family detainment at the U.S. border

In the midst of the moral crisis at our southern border, the traumas that have already been experienced by these children and their families should be kept in mind. The evidence is compelling that the vast majority of families being apprehended or denied entry at the southern border are asylum seekers— escaping violence and persecution in their home countries. Families have undertaken journeys fraught with danger and violence, and have only endured the traumas of their journey because they want to protect the long term welfare of their children. These families are being treated as criminals and forcibly separated from their children when we should instead be welcoming them with open arms. Whether it's forcible separation of families or their prolonged detention together, this is simply unconscionable.

The adverse impact of such traumas on the human brain, and on human growth and development, is well known and documented. Unfortunately, the knowledge of the consequences of trauma too often is not being used to help shape public policy. The appropriate response to these immigrant families is compassion.

These children and their parents are our fellow human beings, the majority of whom are here because they are fleeing violence and persecution. For their sake, and in the name of the values that undergird and animate our country, please choose compassion.

Separating children from their families at our border is not a healthy, compassionate, or acceptable immigration policy. Indeed, it is considered child abuse by many professionals in the field who work tirelessly to preserve family connections and to ensure that children are only separated from their parents in cases of extreme abuse or neglect. FACT commends Governor Northam, Attorney General Mark R. Herring and other Virginia Leaders for challenging the practice of separating children and families at our borders. We ask that federal and state governments work together to reunite families as quickly as possible, to end any policies calling for the detainment of families together, and to find a solution that supports families, ameliorates trauma, and promotes the well-being of all children.

Our Mission:

To provide for the support and development of services for the prevention and treatment of family violence in Virginia