



June 2018

Family separation

This is a guide for ELCA members to learn more about what we are doing as an organization on family separation and immigration policies.

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Resources explaining family separation and the executive order

- President Donald Trump signed an [executive order on June 20, 2018](#) that addresses family separation by ordering the detention of families together. The order also mandates the Department of Defense other agencies find or build family detention facilities. Family detention is inhumane and costlier than community-based alternatives to detention.
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services ([LIRS](#)) [has written at length](#) about the consequences of detention and its alternatives and have been leaders in advocating for community-based alternatives to detention.
- There is absolutely NO law mandating that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should separate families at the border. The decision to do so falls solely on the administration, though Congress could pass policies that end this practice.
- ELCA Advocacy put out a blog explaining [family separation and other immigration policies](#)
- KIND: Kids in Need of Defense [has an amazing timeline about how this administration has stripped protections for children.](#)
- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a FAQ on the current situation of family separation and the reported situation of lost children that can be found [here](#).
- Listen to the hearts of moms who were separated from their children in this video clip [here](#).

What has the ELCA done about this?

- Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton asked interfaith leaders to stand with her against family separation at the border. [Find the statement here](#). In total, 21 interfaith leaders signed this statement.
- Bishop Eaton will visit a child detention facility on July 28. Stay posted on more actions that come out of this visit.
- [ELCA Advocacy](#) has continuously called for the administration to end family separation and met with members of Congress.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

- [ELCA AMMPARO](#) commits to walking alongside children and families fleeing their communities, the same families that are being separated. You can become a welcoming congregation and join the movement as a church.
- ELCA Advocacy posted a blog explaining [family separation and other immigration policies](#)
- ELCA Advocacy sent out an action alert on the DHS budget and family separation: [People should take action telling congress to support a budget that keeps families together](#)
- The ELCA, through the AMMPARO program, has seen cases of family separation since 2017. We have worked together with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) and other organizations to flag those cases for official complaints.

What actions did the ELCA engage in around family detention?

- Through LIRS and its advocacy office, the ELCA has continuously stood alongside vulnerable children. LIRS and ELCA bishops visited a family detention center requesting that the administration stop family detention.
- ELCA staff and members have visited several family detention centers and advocated for the end to the practice.
- Read the June 30, 2014, statement against family detention [here](#).
- ELCA Advocacy sent an action alert to reach out to President Barack Obama to stand against family detention in July 2015. This action is no longer live online.
- Lutheran leaders toured a detention facility in 2015 and spoke strongly against the practice – [read here](#).

How can you advocate?

- ELCA Advocacy put out an action alert on the DHS budget and family separation: [People should take action telling congress to support a budget that keeps families together](#)
- The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations has an action alert related to this issue [here](#).
- ELCA Advocacy sent out another action alert against two harmful House bills that will come up for vote the week of June 18, 2018. Take action [here](#) (this alert will expire when votes are done). Please check [facebook.com/ELCAAdvocacy](#) for updates.
- Sign as women of faith, clergy and laypeople: [Click here](#) to call upon DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen to stop separating children from their parents at the border.
- Sign as *all* community members: [Click here](#) to sign this petition to ask the administration, through the DHS (Department of Homeland Security), ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and CBP (Customs and Border Patrol) to keep families together.
- Call members of Congress: Dial 1-866-940-2439 to connect to your two senators and one representative to let your legislators know you value the ability for families to stay together. Ask them to work for solutions that help the root causes of violence that are causing parents and children to need to escape, especially from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Ask them to request that the administration to stop detaining families, and share scriptures that influence your values. [Find your officials here](#).



How can you continue to walk alongside these migrants through the ELCA?

- Become a welcoming congregation and/or join the [AMMPARO network](#). Reach out to Mary Campbell at Mary.Campbell@elca.org.
- Become a Guardian Angel and be the physical presence of the church in the courtroom. Programs currently exist in Los Angeles, Chicago, Denver and Omaha. Contact Mary Campbell at Mary.Campbell@elca.org if you are interested in starting a Guardian Angel Program.
- Follow [ELCA.org/advocacy](https://www.elca.org/advocacy), [facebook.com/ELCAAdvocacy](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAAdvocacy) and [facebook.com/ELCAammparo](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAammparo)
- Join [the ELCA Action Center](#)

Where can I find events near me?*

- Happening at the border:
 - Thursday, June 21 - faith mission to the Ursula processing center in Texas, led by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. Please email Jordyn Bussey at bussey@civilrights.org to join the delegation of rabbis, ministers, bishops, and other faith leaders who will be ministering to children and holding a vigil outside of Ursula.
 - Saturday, June 23 - Families Belong Together March in San Diego, CA, led by San Diego Indivisible. See additional details on [Facebook](#).
 - Sunday, June 24 - action in Tornillo, Texas, led by Voto Latino. Visit www.stopseparation.org to sign up and learn more.
 - Thursday, June 28 - mass mobilization at the Brownsville Federal Court in Texas, led by the ACLU. Join the #FamiliesBelongTogether rally in Linear Park at 11 a.m. [RSVP here or on Facebook](#)
 - Date TBD (possibly July 1) – mom’s march from El Paso to Tornillo, Texas, led by Paola Mendoza. Email pmendoza44@gmail.com for more details and to join.
 - Volunteer with local organizations. Sacred Heart Church, NETA, ProBAR, and the Texas Civil Rights Project are just some of the organizations you can help if you are in Texas or willing to travel there. Please refer to the “[Families Belong Together Guide on How to Help](#)” for more details.
- Happening around the country
 - June 30 is a mass mobilization day. Please check [familiesbelongtogether.org](https://www.familiesbelongtogether.org) for more information as the date approaches.

* *These are not events that we have vetted, so please be careful when sharing.*

Where should I donate?

- You can donate to [ELCA AMMPARO](#), which accompanies children and families in the U.S., in transit and in their countries of origin.
- You can donate to [ELCA World Hunger](#), which supports the work of LIRS ([LIRS.org](https://www.lirs.org)).