



Council of the District of Columbia

Sense of the Council Regarding Federal Immigration Raids Resolution of 2016

Thursday, November 17, 2016

**Testimony of
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American Academy of Pediatrics, District of Columbia Chapter**

My name is Dr. Nathalie Quion. I am a pediatrician, and I represent the District of Columbia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (DC AAP).

DC AAP is the Washington, D.C. chapter of the national organization of 64,000 pediatricians. The D.C. chapter has over 400 members, including pediatricians, residents and medical students from all of the District's hospitals, community clinics, private practices, and school based health centers.

I am here to speak about the health effects of Federal Immigration Raids on children.

There are about to 4.5 million U.S. citizen children living in "mixed status families". A "mixed-status family" is a family whose members include people with different citizenship or immigration statuses. One example of a mixed-status family is one in which the parents are undocumented and the children are U.S.-born citizens.

Between 2003 and 2013, the U.S. government formally removed 3.7 million immigrants to their home countries. According to the most reliable estimates, parents of U.S.-born children made up between one-fifth and one-quarter of this total.

An increasing body of social scientific literature documents the adverse impact of these U.S. immigration policies and their enforcement on U.S. migrant families and children.

1) Children with deported parents experienced a number of harms following a parent's deportation or detention. Research has also shown that children with a parent who is incarcerated and deported are 3 to 4 times more likely to engage in delinquent behavior and are more likely to have substance abuse problems and to be unemployed. In the wake of parental incarceration, family members must deal with the sequela of traumatic separation, loneliness, stigma, strained parenting, reduced family income, unstable childcare arrangements, and home and school instability.

2) The trauma of sudden and imposed family separation from deportations involves a double or triple trauma for children, who may witness the forcible removal of the parent, suddenly lose their caregiver, and/or abruptly lose their familiar home environment, which can lead to anxiety and depression.

3) Children with detained and deported parents had difficulty accessing conventional health, mental health, early education and social services.

4) When the fathers are deported, this results in new single mothers. Children in a single parent household are 4.2 times more likely to live in poverty, and to face housing insecurity, food insecurity, psychological distress, and slipping from low-income into poverty. Additionally, the loss of the deported parent can create a crisis in childcare, and older siblings may be increasingly relied on for care of younger siblings.

6) The aftermath of deportation impacts entire communities as it instills fear of family separation and distrust of anyone assumed to be associated with the government, including local police, school personnel, health professionals and social service professionals.

The AAP Policy Statement on Protecting Immigrant Children states: “The health, well-being and safety of children should be prioritized in all immigration proceedings whenever possible. The separation of a child from his or her family and home environment should be prevented and family reunions should be expedited.” We support the District’s strong commitment to protecting children and families. The deportation raids targeting Central American youth and their families threaten the health, well-being and human rights of migrants in the District of Columbia and should be halted immediately.

References:

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3. Research Report from the Urban Institute and Migration Policy Institute: Health and Social Service Needs of U.S.-Citizen Children with Detained or Deported Immigrant Parents, September 2015
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