

Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate



June 19, 2018

06/ 014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I write to you asking compassion for the children and their parents now being separated and confined in detention centers as a result of the Administration's zero tolerance policy. On behalf of these children—some of them infants and toddlers—and together with all the bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, I ask that you reconsider this policy and allow families to be kept together while the immigration courts are considering their cases.

This past January you proved to be a champion of life when, addressing those gathered in Washington D.C. to proclaim the sanctity of life, you offered the following words: "Under my administration, we will always defend the very first right in the Declaration of Independence, and that is the right to life." As Christians we are called to defend all life, be it the life of a fetus in the womb, the life of a child at the border, or the life of a mother fleeing violence and seeking a better life. Every one of these immigrants is a child of God.

The United States of America is a nation of laws from which we derive great benefit. And because of this we enjoy many freedoms here, chief among them to us Christians, and others of faith, being the freedom to worship. We well understand the need to protect our borders and our cities, but surely there must be a better way to do so.

Mr. President, let us embrace the vision of President Ronald Reagan who, in his farewell address, likened our country to a city on a hill, a "God-blessed" city, a city that if needing walls, has walls with doors, doors "open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here." Surely, this is the vision of America to which we all aspire. In service to this vision I ask you again, in the name of compassion, to reconsider the government's policy of zero tolerance.

Most Respectfully,

+TIKHON
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

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