



Durbin: Trump executive order on child separation calls for locking up children and their families indefinitely

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WASHINGTON — In a speech on the Senate Floor, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) blasted President Trump, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and the Trump Administration's cruel policy of separating children from their parents who arrive at the Southern border of the United States seeking protection from horrific violence in the Northern Triangle region of Central America. Durbin criticized the President's Wednesday Executive Order that doubles down on his "zero-tolerance" policy and criminalizes asylum-seekers and seeks to indefinitely detain their children.

"First, he came for the Dreamers. Then with his zero-tolerance policy, he came for the children, the infants, the toddlers, the little boys and girls who accompanied their parents to the border of the United States. President Trump did something that most Americans – two out of three – find not only objectionable but unimaginable. This President decided as a matter of policy, a get tough policy towards immigration, that he would take children, babies, and infants away from their parents," Durbin said. "Kids in cages. That's the Trump approach to immigration."

"This Executive Order does not solve the crisis created. The order doubles down on the President Trump, Attorney General Sessions, and Stephen Miller 'zero-tolerance' policy that started this whole crisis of punishing children and families. The order provides no guarantee that families will actually be kept together."

The President's Executive Order attempts to overturn the Flores Settlement, a 1997 court order that set minimum standards for the detention, housing, and release of non-citizen children who are detained by the U.S. government, and requires the government to pursue a general policy of releasing children. Repealing the Flores Settlement was a key component of President Trump's own immigration legislation, which was rejected by the Senate 39-60 in February.

Known as the Northern Triangle, the countries of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala have among the highest homicide rates in the world, and girls face a constant threat of sexual violence, with little protection from local authorities. This is why children and their families are taking extraordinary risks to flee to the U.S. border. More than 90 percent of unaccompanied children referred to HHS are from the three nations in the Northern Triangle.

In March, Durbin and 23 of his Senate colleagues pressed the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Acting Inspector General to investigate allegations that DHS is separating the children of asylum-seekers from their parents. This request followed [reports](#) of the case of a seven-year-old girl and her mother from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who were separated for more than four months after they presented themselves at the U.S. border and sought protection in accordance with the law.