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REPRESENTATIVES MENG AND JAYAPAL JOIN CALL WITH IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE MOMS IMPACTED BY U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICIES SEPARATING FAMILIES

Urge Congress to Stop The Administration's Attacks on Women and Children Ahead of Mother's Day

Washington, D.C. – Representatives Grace Meng (NY-6) and Pramila Jayapal (WA-7) joined immigrant and refugee mothers for a press call this morning to discuss the status of immigrant moms under the Trump administration ahead of Mother's Day this Sunday.

Mothers of all walks of life, including documented and undocumented immigrants, refugees, and U.S. citizens have been impacted by the Trump administration's nativist and anti-immigrant policies. The Departments of Homeland Security and Justice have made it official U.S. policy to separate children from their parents at the border, detain pregnant immigrant women, and slow the admission of refugees to a trickle—preventing many parents from reuniting with their children who remain overseas.

The speakers called on Congress to hold the administration accountable to its commitments under U.S. and international law, uphold the sanctity of family unity, and put their words to action when proclaiming family values.

CONGRESSWOMAN GRACE MENG (NY-6): “Just this past Monday, the Department of Homeland Security announced that it will begin separating parents and children at the border. I never could have imagined that our nation's immigration policies would be this cruel to immigrant families. This policy is designed to intentionally traumatize immigrant children and their parents in a very misguided effort to discourage immigrants from seeking relief here in the U.S. and it's just wrong. It also won't work because it does nothing to address the underlying issues in our immigration system.”

CONGRESSWOMAN PRAMILA JAYAPAL (WA-7): “Republicans like to call themselves the party of family values. So, I challenge them to face reality, and stop President Trump from tearing apart families...I'm urging Republicans in both chambers of Congress to step up to their moral responsibility and stop the Trump Administration from committing atrocities against mothers and their children. This Mother's Day, let us join together and protect the mothers and their children from being torn apart by ICE or CBP.”

REV. TERESA HORD OWENS, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): “My heart aches. How is separating and keeping a mother from her child making our country safe?...The values of mothers to risk much to show love for their families must be respected—and I call on Congress to hold the administration accountable, to protect the sanctity of family unity, and to end these cruel and immoral policies. We pray to God that our nation might live up to its ideals of being a nation that values the sanctity of human life, and that values human unity.”

DEBORAH JANE, former refugee from Uganda and acid attack survivor living in Ohio: “My children were approved to travel to the United States last year in February 2017 by the National Visa Center, but because of the U.S. government's refugee bans and roadblocks...I do not know when I'll see my children again. In Ohio, I am receiving treatment for my injuries from the acid attack. I have no family here, and my

only comfort in these difficult times are the memories of my children and the rare times we are able to speak on the phone. My question for Congress is this: If you say you care about mothers, why are you keeping my children from me? If you say you have family values, help me reunite with mine. I need them to be with me as I seek medical treatment, and they need to be with their mother for this second chance of Life. Senator Portman, on Sunday you will write messages honoring your mother and mothers across America for Mother's Day. But will you honor mothers and other refugees like me with actions or just your words?"

KARINA RUIZ, DACA recipient and Executive Director of Arizona Dream Act Coalition: "This year, I'll get to spend Mother's Day with my three boys and my new grandson, but because Congress has yet to pass permanent protections, because DACA continues to be in limbo, and while Trump continues to demand more money and resources for ICE, CBP and the militarization of border communities like my home, I can't say that I'll be here next year. That's the reality for immigrant mothers across the country, and for mothers who had their children yanked from their arms as they seek refuge in our country. But immigrant mothers, we are tough, we are resilient and we will continue to fight for our families."

MYRLA BALDONADO, Pilipino Workers Center, We Belong Together, and beneficiary of family-based sponsorship: "My mother petitioned me to come [to the U.S.] in 1991 and my visa was approved after 15 years. And I'm one of those who have a happy story of having benefited from the family-based immigration system. Despite the challenges of being an immigrant in my late 50s when I came, I never stopped working since I came. I believe I survived because of the family-based immigration system. My youngest sister became almost like my parent and helped me navigate the system in my early years in Chicago. My heart bleeds for those children who are being separated from their mothers at the border."

MEGAN ESSAHEB, Director of Immigration Advocacy at Advancing Justice | AAJC: "When we talk about immigration policy, we often focus on economic impact but at its core, immigration is about people, families, and communities. Our immigration policy should be reflective of our values as a nation but too often they fall short. Families are the cornerstone of our communities, and so ahead of this Mother's Day we seek to lift up the voices of immigrant mothers and put a human face on the harmful immigration policies of this administration."

Since 1946, Church World Service has supported refugees, immigrants and other displaced individuals, in addition to providing sustainable relief and development solutions to communities that wrestle with hunger and poverty. Learn more about our refugee and immigrant work at GreaterAs1.org.

[Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#) is a national affiliation of five leading organizations advocating for the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and other underserved communities to promote a fair and equitable society for all. The affiliation's members are: Advancing Justice | AAJC (Washington, DC), Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus (San Francisco), Advancing Justice - Los Angeles, Advancing Justice - Atlanta, and Advancing Justice - Chicago.

United We Dream is the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation, a powerful network made up of over 400,000 members and 48 affiliate organizations across 26 states. UWD's vision is to build a multi-racial, multi-ethnic movement of young people who organize and advocate at the local and national levels for the dignity and justice of immigrants and communities of color in the United States. You can find more about UWD online at www.unitedwedream.org.

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