

FAITH PERSPECTIVES OPPOSING RULE CHANGE TO ELIMINATE FLORES

Our Faithful Calling

Welcoming others and caring for the most vulnerable are part of my/our core beliefs as people of faith. I/we believe U.S. policies should reflect core moral values that I/we was/were taught through my faith. Our government should provide broad protections for all children, regardless of citizenship, in the custody of the United States government.

U.S. policies on immigration and the treatment of all children should recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of immigrants and refugees, ensuring justice and protection for all.

Our/my faith tradition(s) have presence around the world. Through this work, we know the families and children who will be affected by this rule change. They are fleeing their communities due to violence and have faced incredible challenges in hopes of seeking protection in the United States. The rule change would hurt already vulnerable children who had hope to find a safe place in our country.

Faith and Child Protection

This rule change would destroy child protection standards the U.S. government and court system established, hurting some of the most vulnerable among us. Our faith grounding has led my/our denomination to advocate for the highest child protection standards to be applied to children in U.S. custody without additional qualifiers. Our treatment of children in U.S. policy is a moral decision that speaks to who we are as a nation.

There is no reason to enact a rule change that would keep families and children in detention longer. Faith-based organizations, such as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, have piloted community-based alternatives to detention (ATDs) that are humane, cost-effective and successful in ensuring families continue their immigration cases. Most recently, in 2013 these organizations coordinated [ATDs for asylum seekers and vulnerable communities](#). Faith-based and secular organizations have the expertise to provide services to children and families that honor their God-given humanity and follow child protection standards while they go through their legal process.

People of faith have started ministries so that children are held in the least restrictive setting while going through their immigration process. Faithful people [foster children](#) who do not have a family member in the U.S. and become their sponsors so they can go to school, receive the mental health care they need, and be welcomed into our communities. We live out our faith in many ways. The proposed change would make it harder for our communities to walk alongside people we are called to welcome.

Faith and Expanding Detention

People of faith have stood strongly against family separation and family detention, regardless of administration, because it hurts some of the most vulnerable among us.

Detaining mothers and fathers with their children leads to long-term trauma for children and creates barriers to legal representation for people who should receive protection in the U.S. It is inhumane and dehumanizing to put families seeking protection in detention.

Beyond punishing children and parents who have already been through a difficult journey to arrive in the U.S., there is no reason to implement rule changes that could potentially increase the detention of children.