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TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Affiliate of the National Association for Bilingual Education

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Statement in Favor of Family Unification and in Support of a Fair Immigration Policy

July 6, 2018

As the leading professional organization for bilingual educators in the State of Texas, The Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TAFE) is committed to serving English learners, advancing bilingual education programs, and supporting the health and well-being of our community. For these reasons, as an organization, we cannot sit by and stay silent about the detention of immigrant minors and the separation of these minors from their families by the federal government at the US-Mexico border.

We censure the President of the United States and his administration's "zero tolerance prosecution policy at the border" ordered by Attorney General Sessions. We also denounce the use of mandatory detention of individuals awaiting a court hearing for pending immigration cases. There is no just cause to detain individuals and families for this purpose nor for the US government to house immigrants in detention centers similar to prisons. At TAFE, we view the requirement of mandatory detention of individuals and families as inhumane when the primary reason these families are coming to the US is to seek asylum and/or the American dream. To hold immigrants indefinitely in detention for pending immigration cases is unjust, fiscally unsound, and counter to the values of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness included in the US Declaration of Independence. The system built around the mandatory detention of desperate people looking for a better life is unjust and abusive. Remaining in the US without documentation is not a crime; it is an administrative issue. Detaining immigrants based on the indefinite pending of immigration cases for what amounts to a civil offense is a profiteering system designed to exploit a desperate people who have no options. We call for an end to a system that relies on racism and xenophobia to support legislators who, at the behest of the private-prison industry, exploit the suffering of immigrant people for the sake of profit.

We, as bilingual educators, are especially aware of the fears and threats our students face from our own government. Our first duty is to safeguard the health and safety of our students and their families in order to ensure an effective learning environment in our classrooms and schools. The immigration policies of President Trump harm the education of our most vulnerable students. Many of our students fear their parents will not be home waiting for them at the end of the school day TAFE condemns the separation of children from their parents, the detention of families, the detention of anyone awaiting the settlement of pending non-criminal immigration cases, and the necessity of mandatory detention. These policies are bad for communities, our families, our students, and our schools. We call for immediate action to be taken for sensible, non-partisan immigration reform.