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# APA Statement Opposing Separation of Children from Parents at the Border

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The American Psychiatric Association issued the following statement from President Altha Stewart, M.D.:

"As physician experts in mental health, the American Psychiatric Association opposes any policy that separates children from their parents at the United States border. Children depend on their parents for safety and support. Any forced separation is highly stressful for children and can cause lifelong trauma, as well as an increased risk of other mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The evidence is clear that this level of trauma also results in serious medical and health consequences for these children and their caregivers. Many families crossing the United States border are fleeing war and violence in their home countries and are already coping with the effects of stress and trauma. These children deserve our protection and should remain with their families as they seek asylum. The APA recommends an immediate halt to the policy of separating children from their parents."

## **American Psychiatric Association**

The American Psychiatric Association, founded in 1844, is the oldest medical association in the country. The APA is also the largest psychiatric association in the world with more than 37,800 physician members specializing in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses. APA's vision is to ensure access to quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. For more information please visit [www.psychiatry.org](http://www.psychiatry.org).

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