



CARECEN

CENTRAL AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER / CENTRO DE RECURSOS CENTROAMERICANOS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2014

Contact: Tessie Borden

CARECEN 213-385-7800 ext. 168

C: 323-559-1895

tborden@carecen-la.org

**CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE “HUMAN SHIELDS” IN D.C. BATTLES OVER IMMIGRATION
Community Groups Urge Senator Feinstein to Keep TVPRA Protections
In the Face of Postponement of Administrative Relief**

(September 9, 2014, Los Angeles) – A coalition of community groups urges Sen. Dianne Feinstein to be a vocal champion of unaccompanied children detained at the border in light of President Obama’s decision this weekend to postpone administrative relief.

The group today is protesting outside Sen. Feinstein’s office and presenting a letter to her staff urging that she hold the line on protections now available to Central American refugee children detained at the border. More than 60,000 children, most of them unaccompanied, have been detained at the U.S.-Mexico border since October 2013.

“The cost of pushing vulnerable children back into a situation of life and death is simply too high, and our nation cannot compromise on fundamental principles of compassion, fairness, and due process,” the letter states. “Now is the time for the United States of America to demonstrate its international leadership and commitment to refugee protection and due process.”

We understand that Sen. Feinstein has been just such a champion in the past with her sponsorship of the Trafficking Victims Authorization Act (TVPRA) in 2008. But this summer’s discussions around funding to deal with the unaccompanied children issue, as well as the President’s announcement Sunday that he was postponing administrative relief for possibly thousands of undocumented immigrants living in this country, leaves this coalition concerned that Feinstein and Obama might negotiate away our children’s protections for political expediency.

“These children are the heart of our community, and protecting them is paramount,” said Martha Arévalo, Executive Director of CARECEN Los Angeles, one of the organizations signing the letter. “We don’t see these protections as interchangeable for granting relief to families who for years have lived in shadows. In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, both initiatives represent absolute minimum protections for communities shredded by current immigration policies. We are concerned that the president and legislative leaders are backtracking on even these basic safeguards.”





CARECEN

CENTRAL AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER / CENTRO DE RECURSOS CENTROAMERICANOS

Other organizations in the coalition also reacted.

“Obama should not be using these children as human shields to evade his responsibility for promises he has made again and again to the immigrant community,” said Elio Martinez, a member of the coordinating committee of Red Nacional Salvadoreña en el Exterior (RENASE). “That’s playing with our dignity. All we get from him are family separations. He has become a champion for deporting Latinos.”

CARECEN has worked for 31 years to protect the rights and dignity of Central American and Latino immigrants in Southern California. Since its founding in 1983, when thousands of Central Americans were fleeing the brutality of civil war, CARECEN has worked to change unjust immigration policies, win legal status for immigrants, and foster community activism on issues such as education reform, workers and immigrant rights, economic justice and community strengthening.

Members of the coalition are: Red Nacional Salvadoreña en el Exterior (RENASE), Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Frente Indigena Oaxaqueño Binacional (FIOB), Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional, Jovenes, Inc., Red Mexicana de Líderes y Organizaciones Migrantes, Salvadoran American Leadership & Educational Fund (SALEF), Movimiento Primero de Abril, and the Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project.

###

Photos available

