

CLASP Statement for the Record
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
“How Mass Deportations Will Separate American Families, Harm Our Armed Forces, and Devastate Our Economy”
December 10, 2024

Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Graham, and members of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, we thank you for this opportunity to submit a statement for the hearing “How Mass Deportations Will Separate American Families, Harm Our Armed Forces, and Devastate Our Economy.” The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is a national, nonpartisan nonprofit advancing anti-poverty policy solutions that disrupt structural and systemic racism and remove barriers blocking people from economic security and opportunity. CLASP works to develop and implement federal, state, and local policies (in legislation, regulation, and implementation) that reduce poverty, improve the lives of people with low incomes, and create pathways to economic security for everyone. That includes directly addressing the barriers people face because of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, and immigration status.

The CLASP policy team has expertise on immigration, child development, education, and health policy as well as on the range of anti-poverty policies impacting immigrant families. CLASP has conducted research on the impact of the Trump Administration’s immigration policies on young children as well as the impact of the Trump Administration’s worksite raids on families and communities. We focus this statement on the short- and long-term implications of immigration enforcement measures on child well-being and express our deep concern about a mass deportation effort that could lead to the harmful expulsion of a record number of people, including U.S. citizen children. As experts on the intersection of immigration and child development policies, we urge Congress to reject increased immigration enforcement policies, including mass deportations, that would heighten the risk of parent-child separation or put children themselves at risk of detention and deportation, as well as cause a chilling effect on immigrant communities in accessing education, health care, and nutrition assistance, and further traumatize children living in mixed-status families.

According to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) data, over 400,000 parents of U.S. citizen children have been deported, resulting in lasting harm to those children, their families, and communities.¹ The number of children impacted is likely higher since the number of U.S.

¹ Nicole Chávez, Suma Setty, Hannah Liu, and Wendy Cervantes, “Still at Risk: The Urgent Need to Address Immigration Enforcement’s Harms to Children,” Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), (June 2023),

citizen children per parent is not reported, and ICE does not publicly report the number of deported parents of non-citizen children. Under a mass deportation plan, millions more children are at risk of losing a parent; 5.2 million children had at least one unauthorized immigrant parent in 2018. Eighty five percent of these children, 4.4 million, are U.S. citizens.² Another 360,000 U.S.-born children of parents with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and 300,000 U.S.-born children with at least one parent with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status are additionally at risk of losing a parent, given the incoming administration's intentions to strip these statuses and make TPS and DACA recipients vulnerable to deportation.³

The threat and reality of increased immigration enforcement, especially parent-child separation, has profound negative impacts on children and communities. These impacts include mental and physical harm, educational setbacks, developmental delays, economic and housing insecurity, decreased access to health care and nutritional assistance, and increased burden on educators, child care staff, and other providers. It is also important to note that the harms of ramped up immigration enforcement are also expected to be combined with other immigration policy attacks that may further undermine immigrant families' and their children's access to critical health care, nutrition, and other supports. And research shows that the cumulative effect of so many threats causes the greatest harm to children's development. Furthermore, any mass deportation effort will lead to an unprecedented climate of fear that will make it virtually impossible for families to effectively raise their children or function normally. The consequences will be immediate and long-term, tearing up families, straining communities left to respond in the aftermath, and ravaging local businesses and economies. We urge Congress to reject any proposal that could fund or otherwise enable the incoming Administration to carry out a reckless and immoral mass deportation plan that will ultimately leave a stain on our nation's history.

<https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/urgent-need-address-immigration-enforcement-harm-children/>.

² Randy Capps et al., "Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States: Stable Numbers, Changing Origins," Migration Policy Institute, (December 2020),

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/unauthorized-immigrants-united-states-stable-numbers-changing-origins>.

³ "Fact Sheet: Temporary Protected Status (TPS)," First Focus on Children (January 31, 2023),

<https://firstfocus.org/resources/fact-sheet/temporary-protected-status#:~:text=Currently%2C%20there%20are%2016%20countries,parents%20who%20are%20TPS%20beneficiaries>; Nicole Prchal Svajlenka and Trinh Q. Truong, "The Demographic and Economic Impacts of DACA Recipients: Fall 2021 Edition," Center for American Progress (November 24, 2021);

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-demographic-and-economic-impacts-of-daca-recipients-fall-2021-edition/>; Paul Dans and Steven Groves (ed.), Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise,

The Heritage Foundation (2024), <https://www.project2025.org/>

Both the threat and reality of immigration enforcement and parent-child separation are Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur to children ages 0-17. These experiences include abuse, witnessing violence, and death of a family member by suicide, among others.⁴ The ACEs framework is widely used across child well-being researchers and practitioners because of evidence demonstrating that the more ACEs a child experiences, the higher their risk for health and social problems in adulthood.⁵ The long-term impacts of ACEs include higher likelihood of becoming an adult victim of violence, illicit drug use, tobacco use, obesity, depressed mood, panic/anxiety, and suicidal ideation, among other physical and mental health problems.⁶ Health researchers argue that negative immigration-related events, such as the detention and deportation of a parent or caregiver and even the threat of parental detention, constitute as Adverse Childhood Experiences, given the plethora of evidence on the threat and deprivation that children in immigrant families experience in restrictive, anti-immigrant socio political contexts.⁷ The below expanded ACEs framework from Barajas-Gonzalez, et al. in *Social Science & Medicine* visualizes the numerous immigration-related ACEs that children may experience and the level of impact they may have on children on axes of threat and deprivation.

Some of the ACEs with the highest deprivation and threat to children are childrens' experiences of detention/deportation, the detention/deportation of a caregiver, and food, housing, and economic insecurity due to a deported breadwinner. The effect of these ACEs' impact on the child's short and long-term development depends on their developmental stage and their and their families' legal status, which in turn impact the severity and frequency of these immigration-related ACEs. The model also illustrates how the level of threat and deprivation children experience is also dependent on a larger environment of immigration policies and anti-immigrant sentiment and the child's own perception and awareness of immigration policies. Ultimately, the reality and threat of immigration-related adverse events in childhood "function as anticipatory stressors that can become chronic stressors, a disruption to family preservation and

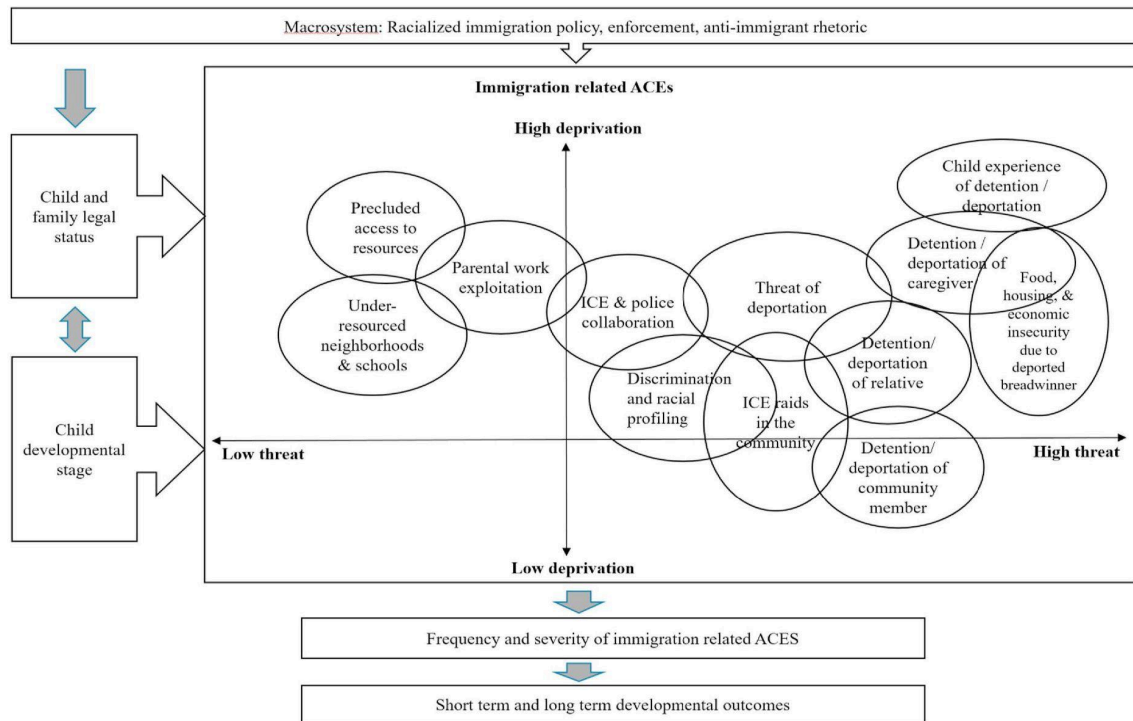
⁴ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "About Adverse Childhood Experiences," (October 2024), <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html>.

⁵ Shannon Struck et al., "Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) research: A bibliometric analysis of publication trends over the first 20 years," *Child Abuse and Neglect International Journal*, (February 2021) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213420305500>.

⁶ Adverse childhood experiences and associated health outcomes: A systematic review and meta-analysis, 2019, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0145213419303047>

⁷ R.G. Barajas-Gonzalez et.al., An ecological expansion of the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) framework to include threat and deprivation associated with U.S. immigration policies and enforcement practices: An examination of the Latinx immigrant experience, *282 Soc. Sci. & Med.* at 2 (2021), <http://tinyurl.com/yssyzsub>.

unity, and a pervasive threat to children’s sense of safety,” seriously damaging children’s mental and physical health.⁸



Note. ACEs = Adverse childhood experiences; ICE = Immigration and customs enforcement.

Deportations harm the mental health and well-being of children in immigrant families.

Having stable caretakers is key to a healthy childhood, especially for young children and those with special needs.⁹ Children in mixed-status families, however, live with a constant sense of uncertainty and fear that their parents could be taken away at any moment. In accordance with an expanded ACEs framework incorporating immigration-related adversity, increased immigration enforcement will exacerbate childrens’ anxiety and distress. Numerous studies demonstrate the connection of both the threat of immigration enforcement as well as the detention and deportation of a family member to adverse mental health, behavioral problems, and health issues for children in immigrant families. A 2017 CLASP study across six states found that children as young as three-years-old were expressing fear about losing a parent to deportation and demonstrating those fears through words and troubling behaviors; one child was described as biting his fingertips to the point of bleeding.¹⁰

⁸ R.G. Barajas-Gonzalez et al., An ecological expansion, 2021.

⁹ “Parents and Caregivers Are Essential to Children’s Healthy Development,” American Psychological Association, (June 2023), <https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/parents-caregivers>.

¹⁰ Cervantes et al, Our Children’s Fear, 2018.

Children whose parents are deported are significantly more likely to experience mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety, as well as display signs of aggression and other behavioral issues.¹¹ They may suffer from social isolation, self-stigma, insomnia, and may experience post-traumatic stress and/or attachment disorders.¹² Young children experience these impacts even more because of their emotional and physical dependence on their caregivers and are at developmental stages when interactions with primary caregivers provide a foundation for health and well-being.¹³ The impact of parental detention and deportation may magnify for children if they see the arrest happening. Research shows that when a child witnesses a parents' arrest, they suffer the greatest impacts to their mental health, as is the case when a child is present when a parent is arrested at a traffic stop, home raid, or when dropping off a child at school or child care.¹⁴ While there are a few policies in place to guide the handling of children, there is limited consistency in implementation and no child-focused training for immigration agents for how to mitigate the trauma to children.¹⁵

These emotional and behavioral impacts may even have life or death implications. An Ohio pre-teen died by suicide following her father's deportation after he was stopped by police for using high beams while driving.¹⁶ These stories linking immigration enforcement with adolescent trauma and suicide are not simply anecdotes. One study linked the detention and deportation of a family member with increased alcohol use, problem behaviors, and suicidal ideation among Latinx adolescents while another linked adolescents' concerns about the impacts of U.S. immigration policy with increased levels of anxiety, sleep issues, and adverse blood pressure changes.¹⁷ Additionally, in the aftermath of a Tennessee workplace raid in April 2018, behavioral

¹¹ Luis H. Zayas et al., "The Distress of Citizen-Children with Detained and Deported Parents." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 24, no. 11 (November 1, 2015): 3213–23

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-015-0124-8>; Wendy Cervantes, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews, "Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children," CLASP (March 2018), https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018/03/2018_ourchildrensfears.pdf.

¹² Luis H. Zayas & Laurie Cook Heffron, "Disrupting young lives: How detention and deportation affect US-born children of immigrants," *Am. Psych. Ass'n* (Nov. 2016).

<https://mi-aimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/L.-Zayas-Disrupting-Young-Lives-How-Detention-and-Deportation-Affect-US-born-Children-of-Immigrants-copy.pdf>

¹³ Ajay Chaudry et al., "Facing Our Future: Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Enforcement", Urban Institute (2010), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/facing-our-future>; Randy Capps et al., "Implications of Immigration Enforcement Activities for the Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families: A Review of the Literature," *Migration Policy Inst.* (Sept. 2015), <https://tinyurl.com/ybm62mqa>.

¹⁴ Chaudry et al., "Facing Our Future," 2010.

¹⁵ "ICE Detained Parents Directive" Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (March 2024), <https://www.ice.gov/detain/parental-interest>.

¹⁶ Lynn Tramonte and Suma Setty, "Broken Hope: Deportation and the Road Home," (December 2023), Center for Law and Social Policy, https://www.clasp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023_Broken-Hope-Deportation-and-the-Road-Home_Issue-Brief-1.pdf.

¹⁷ Kathleen M. Roche, et al., "Association of Family Member Detention or Deportation With Latino or Latina Adolescents' Later Risks of Suicidal Ideation, Alcohol Use, and Externalizing Problems," *JAMA Pediatrics*

issues and substance use among local Hispanic students increased; substance use disorders during the raid year was 1.5 times above the average rate, while diagnoses of self-harm, suicide attempts, or suicidal ideation increased by 50 percent.¹⁸ The long-term implications of children's mental health issues are concerning; behavioral problems, depression, and anxiety in children are associated with a number of health and wellness complications and economic and social exclusion in adulthood.¹⁹

Increased immigration enforcement puts ALL children's mental health and healthy development at risk.

Immigration enforcement, including mass deportations, has cascading impacts on the health and well-being of all children in affected communities. Young children do not often understand the nuances of immigration policy and may not even know whether their parents are at risk of being detained or deported. CLASP's research found that even children whose parents had legal status or were U.S. citizens expressed fear and anxiety. One Head Start teacher recounted a young child's fear that the president would send her mom back to Mexico, despite her mother not even being from Mexico.²⁰

Moreover, research has found that children whose parents are not deported, but have adults in their social networks deported also experience this distress. The more people a child's parents know who have been deported, the more likely the child has developmental delays or diagnoses.²¹ This finding demonstrates how parental stress trickles down to their children, affecting their healthy development and well-being. Research has consistently shown that hardship and distress in the early years can compromise healthy development and growth in both the short and long terms.²²

174, no.5: 478-486 (2020), doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.0014; Brenda Eskenazi, et al, "Association of Perceived Immigration Policy Vulnerability With Mental and Physical Health Among USBorn Latino Adolescents in California," JAMA Pediatrics 173, no. 8 (2019): 744-753, doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.1475. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32176245/>

¹⁸ Carolyn Heinrich, Mónica Hernández, and Mason Shero, "Repercussions of a Raid: Health and Education Outcomes of Children Entangled in Immigration Enforcement," Journal of Policy Analysis and Management (December 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22443>.

¹⁹ Ann S. Masten et al., "Developmental cascades: linking academic achievement and externalizing and internalizing symptoms over 20 years," Developmental Psychology 41, no.5: 733-746 (2005), doi:10.1037/0012-1649.41.5.733; <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/article-abstract/2800143>.

²⁰Wendy Cervantes, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews, "Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children," CLASP (March 2018). https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018/03/2018_ourchildrensfears.pdf.

²¹Edward D. Vargas and Viridiana L. Benitez, "Latino parents' links to deportees are associated with developmental disorders in their children," Journal of Community Psychology, (March 2019), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jcop.22178>.

²² "Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children's Learning and Development: Working Paper No. 9," National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2010); "The Science of Early Childhood

The negative impact is not limited to young children. While young children may not understand who is at risk, older children are not as sheltered from the greater ecosystem of fear caused by the threat of increased immigration enforcement. A 2021 study found that adolescents with foreign-born parents experienced more psychological worry and behavioral withdrawal responses to immigration actions and news than their peers with U.S.-born parents, even among those with parents who had legal status.²³ In addition, the 2018 Tennessee worksite raid study also revealed that even U.S. citizen children whose families were not directly involved in the raid experienced increased behavioral issues and substance use disorders.²⁴

Immigration enforcement actions, in particular large-scale raids, immediately endanger children.

Immigration policies, including enforcement policies, have historically failed to consider the impact on children, such as parental separation. Following workplace immigration raids under the G.W. Bush and Trump Administrations resulting in hundreds of deportations, local schools and churches stepped in to coordinate care for children whose parents were detained.²⁵ In a few cases, Child Protective Services (CPS) was unable to account for the safety of children impacted by the raids. A study conducted by CLASP focused on the first Trump Administration’s worksite raids found that lack of communication with local schools and CPS prior to the raids left schools scrambling to respond to ensure children were not returning to empty homes or unnecessarily placed in the care of CPS.²⁶ Another study found that parents who were detained or deported often encountered difficulties in reunifying with children who were involved in the child welfare system, leading at times to the unnecessary termination of parental rights and permanent family separation.²⁷ While several policies have been implemented over the past two decades to mitigate some of the harm to children and families caused by immigration enforcement, it is likely that

Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do,” National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2007); “From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development,” Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds., Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000); Martin H. Teicher et al., “The Neurobiological Consequences of Early Stress and Childhood Maltreatment,” *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Review* 27, no. 1-2 (2003): 33-44, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-7634\(03\)00007-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-7634(03)00007-1).

²³ Recent immigration actions and news and the adjustment of U.S. Latino/a adolescents. By Roche, Kathleen M., White, Rebecca M. B., Rivera, Maria Ivonne, Safa, M. Dalal, Newman, Daniel, Falusi, Olanrewaju *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, Vol 27(3), Jul 2021, 447-459. <https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2020-55758-001>.

²⁴ Heinrich et al., *Repercussions of a Raid*, 2022.

²⁵ Heinrich et al., *Repercussions of a Raid*, 2022; Cervantes et al., *The Day That ICE Came*, 2020.

²⁶ Cervantes et al., *The Day That ICE Came*, 2020.

²⁷ Seth Freed Wessler et. al., “Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersection of Immigration Enforcement and the Child Welfare System,” *Applied Research Center (now Race Forward)*, (November 2011), <https://www.raceforward.org/research/reports/shattered-families>.

the safety and well-being of children will not be a priority of the incoming Trump Administration. In fact, we are concerned that several protective policies may be completely rescinded, putting children at greater risk of immediate danger and long-term harm.

Given the stated goals of the incoming Administration’s mass deportation plan, it is likely that the use of large-scale raids will once again be used. This includes worksite raids as well as widespread home raids. The very aggressive nature of the way these raids are carried out put children at great risk, even more so if no preventative protective policies are in place to mitigate the harm to children. Home raids are often carried out in the middle of the night, resulting in children waking up to armed guards breaking into their homes, separating parents from children in different rooms, and arresting parents and taking them away. Large-scale worksite raids, which were ended under the Obama Administration and revived under the Trump Administration, are often carried out in a militaristic, highly forceful manner. As documented in CLASP’s *The Day That ICE Came* report, many who witnessed the 2019 Mississippi raid—the largest operation in U.S. history—described it as feeling like a “terrorist attack.”²⁸ Small, normally quiet towns were swarmed with helicopters and armed officials, and children, whose schools were sometimes across the street within view of the poultry plants, recalled watching in horror as their handcuffed parents were marched in lines into white vans. It was also the first day of school in several of the school districts impacted, making it more traumatic for young children who were going to school for the first time as well as more difficult for school administrators to respond. When such chaos is the rule of the day, it is nearly impossible to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Families with children face financial and housing instability because of parental detention and deportation.

When a caregiver is removed from the household due to deportation, household income is reduced, either because the deported caregiver’s earnings are lost or they need to pay for childcare. Recent studies estimate that immigration enforcement reduces the median household income of affected families between 19 and 47 percent, which means millions of families are driven into poverty due to detention and deportation.²⁹ Moreover, the costs of detention and deportation add up; families must pay for legal assistance, transportation to visit loved ones in

²⁸ Cervantes et al., *The Day That ICE Came*, 2020.

²⁹ Catalina Amuedo-Dorantes, Esther Arenas-Arroyo, and Almudena Sevilla, “Immigration Enforcement and Economic Resources of Children With Likely Unauthorized Parents,” Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford (July 2021), https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:dccc7ad6-d069-4b62-b19d-25609ac95f71/download_file?file_format=pdf&safe_filename=Amuedo_Arenas_Sevilla_2018.pdf&type_of_work=Journal+article; Robert Warren and Donald Kerwin, “Mass Deportations Would Impoverish US Families and Create Immense Social Costs,” Center for Migration Studies (2017), <https://cmsny.org/publications/mass-deportations-impoverish-us-families-create-immense-costs/>.

detention centers, and, if their loved one is deported, support their loved one in another country where their economic stability is not guaranteed.³⁰

Following the 2019 Mississippi worksite raid – the largest worksite raid in U.S. history with more than 1,800 arrests— families of the nearly 700 detained or deported workers, including those with children, struggled to make ends meet. Consequently, virtually all families reported having to turn to charitable donations for support with basic needs like rent, utilities, and food for months afterward. Even family members with work authorization had a hard time finding work in the aftermath of the raids.³¹ Families impacted during prior worksite raids who also lost all of most of their income had great difficulty rebounding even a year later and had to move in with other families to save on housing costs.³²

As a result of financial instability, households impacted by deportation will struggle to make ends meet, including paying for rent, utilities, food, diapers, and other basic, essential needs. Deportations resulting in the removal of primary income earners from their households play a large role in housing instability, foreclosures, and additional loss of property among mixed-status Latino households.³³ Housing instability and an increased likelihood of poverty can have profound impacts on children’s developmental health.³⁴

Moreover, the impact of large-scale worksite raids and increased deportations can devastate local economies, affecting local housing and job markets and business climates.³⁵ These ripple effects

³⁰ Ojeda VD, Magana C, Burgos JL and Vargas-Ojeda AC, “Deported Men’s and Father’s Perspective: The Impacts of Family Separation on Children and Families in the U.S.” *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, (March 2020) 11:148. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2020.00148. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32256398/>.

³¹ Cervantes et al., *The Day That ICE Came*, 2020.

³² Chaudry et al., *Facing Our Future*, 2010.

³³ Jacob S. Rugh and Matthew Hall, “Deporting the American Dream: Immigration Enforcement and Latino Foreclosures,” *Sociological Science* 3, no. 46: 1053-1076, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15195/v3.a46>; Baker, Beth and Alejandra Marchevsky, “Gendering deportation, policy violence, and Latino/a family precarity,” *Latino Studies* 17 (2019): 207–24, doi: 10.1057/s41276-019-00176-0; Juan Manuel Pedroza, “Housing Instability in an Era of Mass Deportations,” *Population Research and Policy Review*, (May 2022), <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11113-022-09719-1>; Heather Koball et al., “Health and Social Service Needs of US-Citizen Children with Detained or Deported Immigrant Parents,” Urban Institute (September 2015).

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/71131/2000405-Health-and-Social-Service-Needs-of-US-Citizen-Children-with-Detained-or-Deported-Immigrant-Parents.pdf>.

³⁴ Heather Koball et al., “Health and Social Service Needs of US-Citizen Children with Detained or Deported Immigrant Parents,” Urban Institute (September 2015).

<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/71131/2000405-Health-and-Social-Service-Needs-of-US-Citizen-Children-with-Detained-or-Deported-Immigrant-Parents.pdf>.

³⁵ Juan Pedroza and Molly Scott, “ICE worksite raids are back. Here’s what we know about them,” Urban Institute (2018),

<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/ice-worksite-raids-are-back-heres-what-we-know-about-them>; Chloe

cause harm to all residents, including U.S.-born families with children, living in impacted communities, as small towns struggle to recover from these shocks sometimes even a decade afterward.³⁶

Deportations will cause a chilling effect among immigrant communities, limiting their access to nutrition assistance, health care, and other essential services.

Fear of deportation casts a cloud of uncertainty and danger over common activities that affect immigrant families' ability to live their lives. This phenomenon restricting daily life—commonly referred to as the “chilling effect”—causes families to avoid seeking out basic necessities, from medical care to social services.³⁷ As a result, children become isolated from the larger community, miss critical health care milestones like vaccinations and well-child visits, and experience food insecurity due to their families forgoing the nutrition assistance for which they are eligible.³⁸ Again, we are particularly concerned about the potential for the chilling effect to be even greater under the next Trump Administration, as they have indicated plans to strip DACA recipients and TPS holders of their status and rescind the “protected areas” policy that restricts immigration enforcement from hospitals and health care settings, child care centers, places of learning, and places of worship.³⁹

During the site visits conducted by CLASP in 2017, parents reported needing to plan out their basic activities to ensure whenever possible that a family member with lawful status was driving, and at times even the most critical outings were skipped.⁴⁰ For example, parents in rural Pennsylvania shared their reluctance to take their children to the emergency room at night because it was known that ICE patrolled the highway to the nearest hospital, and parents in several states shared that they had posted signs on the doors of their home at children's eye level with the warning “*No abre la puerta*” (“don't open the door.”) Parents even avoided taking their children to places like playgrounds and libraries, in particular when there were rumors in the community about ICE vehicles spotted near such areas.

East, “Brookings Institute (2024),

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-labor-market-impact-of-deportations/>.

³⁶ Pedroza and Scott, ICE worksite raid, 2010.

³⁷ Qingwen Xu and Kalina Brabeck, “Service Utilization for Latino Children in Mixed-Status Families,” *Social Work Research* 36, no. 3 (2012): 209–21, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42659834>; Carolyn Heinrich, Mónica Hernández, and Mason Shero, “Repercussions of a Raid: Health and Education Outcomes of Children Entangled in Immigration Enforcement,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* (December 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22443>.

³⁸ Wendy Cervantes, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews, “Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children,” CLASP (March 2018),

https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018/03/2018_ourchildrensfears.pdf.

³⁹ *Project 2025*, The Heritage Foundation.

⁴⁰ Cervantes et al., “Our Children's Fear”, (March 2018)

The level of fear in communities often varies, depending on the level of immigration enforcement in the state or other anti-immigrant policies. For example, communities often feel less safe in states where there are partnerships between ICE and local law enforcement agencies (e.g., Section 287(g) agreements, Secure Communities programs), which also erodes immigrant communities' trust in local government and healthcare services.⁴¹ A 2012 North Carolina study evaluating the health impacts of 287(g) agreements and the Secure Communities programs found that Latina mothers sought prenatal care later and received insufficient care relative to non-Latina mothers. Latina respondents shared that they were mistrustful of health services, likely influenced by the presence of 287(g) agreements and the Secure Communities program in that area at the time.⁴²

Restricted mobility and fear of accessing basic needs also is heightened following a large-scale raid, including home raids and worksite raids. Following the 2019 Mississippi worksite raid, children were absent from schools for several days, and some families even hid out in their homes for weeks with curtains pulled over their windows.⁴³ In addition, because the 2018 Tennessee raid occurred at the same time as a community health event, Hispanic families too afraid to venture out of their homes missed out on vaccinations, basic health screenings, and information offered to community members attending the event. Many Hispanic families subsequently stopped attending other health-related appointments with their children altogether.⁴⁴

In addition to the fear of immigration enforcement, other anti-immigrant policies—such as the “public charge rule” under the first Trump Administration—create additional concerns that may deter immigrant families, including those with lawfully present and U.S. citizen family members, from accessing essential safety net benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, or the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In a survey of adults in immigrant families with children, 10.2% and 9.6% of respondents stated that they or a family member avoided applying for SNAP and Medicaid/CHIP, respectively. The rates were higher among adults in low-income immigrant families with children, who reported the same avoidance of SNAP and Medicaid/CHIP at 17.1% and 14.8%, respectively.⁴⁵ The chilling effect creates

⁴¹ Chavez et al., Still at Risk, <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/urgent-need-address-immigration-enforcement-harm-children/>.

⁴² Scott D. Rhodes et al., “The Impact of Local Immigration Enforcement Policies on the Health of Immigrant Hispanics/Latinos in the United States,” *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 2 (Feb. 1, 2015): 329-37, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302218>.

⁴³ Cervantes et al., *The Day that ICE Came*, (July 2020)

⁴⁴ Heinrich et al, 2022.

⁴⁵ Jennifer M. Haley et al., “One in Five Adults in Immigrant Families with Children Reported Chilling Effects on Public Benefit Receipt in 2019,” Urban Institute (June 18, 2020), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/one-five-adults-immigrant-families-children-reported-chilling-effects-public-benefit-receipt-2019>.

quantifiable health access inequities; approximately 4 in 10 undocumented immigrants were uninsured in 2020, compared to 1 in 10 U.S. citizens. Further, U.S. citizen children of immigrants were more than twice as likely to be uninsured if they have at least one noncitizen parent than if they have two citizen parents (10% vs. 4%)⁴⁶. With regard to nutrition access, mixed-status Mexican families are significantly less likely to participate in WIC, a critical health and nutrition program for pregnant individuals and young children with low incomes.⁴⁷ A recent survey finds that this chilling effect has lingered for years after the Trump Administration left office, with many immigrant families continuing to avoid public benefit programs as of 2021.⁴⁸

The harmful impact on the well-being of immigrant families of avoiding essential services for immigration-related reasons is well-documented.⁴⁹ The COVID-19 pandemic also demonstrated what immigrant communities and advocates have long known—that the health and wellbeing of immigrants are inextricable from that of the greater community.⁵⁰ One study found that an increase in immigration enforcement led to a decrease in undocumented immigrants intending to receive the vaccine, meaning that immigration enforcement undermines public health efforts to contain infectious diseases like COVID-19.⁵¹ This finding aligns with reporting that immigration enforcement fears were among the reasons mixed-status families were reluctant to get vaccinated.⁵² Immigration enforcement tactics have been shown to target immigrants and their families, sometimes regardless of actual citizenship status, thereby producing a chilling effect across entire communities. When immigrant families are too afraid to take care of themselves, the entire community suffers.

⁴⁶ “Health Coverage of Immigrants,” Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation,

<https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-healthpolicy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-of-immigrants/>.

⁴⁷ Edward D. Vargas and Maureen A. Pirog, “Mixed-Status Families and WIC Uptake: The Effects of Risk of Deportation on Program Use,” *Social Science Quarterly* 97 (April 2016): 555-572,

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12286>.

⁴⁸ Jennifer M. Haley, Dulce Gonzalez, and Genevieve M. Kenney, “Immigration Concerns Continued to Deter Immigrant Families with Children from Safety Net Programs in 2021, Compounding Other Enrollment Difficulties,” Urban Institute (2022), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/immigration-concerns-continued-deter-immigrant-families-children-safety-net>.

⁴⁹ Elisa Minoff et al., “The Lasting Legacy of Exclusion,” Center for the Study of Social Policy and Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, (August 2021),

<https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Lasting-Legacy-of-Exclusion-FINAL-ACCESSIBLE.pdf>

⁵⁰ Juan Carlos Gomez and Vanessa Meraz, “Immigrant Families during the Pandemic: On the Frontlines but Left Behind,” CLASP (February 11, 2022), <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/immigrant-families-pandemic-frontlines/>.

⁵¹ May Sudhinaraset, Ezinne Nwankwo, and Hye Young Choi, “Immigration enforcement exposures and COVID-19 vaccine intentions among undocumented immigrants in California,” *Preventive Medicine Reports* (June 2022), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335522001152>.

⁵² Miriam Jordan, “After a pandemic pause, ICE resumes deportation arrests,” *The New York Times*, September 14, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/12/us/ice-immigration-sweeps-deportation.html>.

Children experience educational setbacks because of mass deportation.

Education is an important stepping stone toward future success, but fear and anxiety about immigration enforcement often undermine student achievement and access to education, from early education through postsecondary education. Children with at least one undocumented parent made up 12% of the U.S. K-12 school enrollment in 2021.⁵³ Beyond setting students up for future economic security and socioemotional development, places of learning also act as important community hubs to help families access emotional or material support.⁵⁴

Local immigration enforcement raids and collaboration with law enforcement through 287(g) enforcement have been shown to decrease school engagement by increasing chronic student absenteeism and displacing students, disrupting learning, and threatening future achievement.⁵⁵ In addition to worksite raids and local law enforcement cooperation with federal enforcement authorities, a recent study found that absenteeism could be a response to local and state anti-immigration laws as well. After the enactment of a state immigration enforcement law, absences and withdrawals from school of both undocumented and documented Hispanic students increased.⁵⁶

We are gravely concerned about the potential for widespread fear related to immigration enforcement to have an even a greater impact on school participation during the second Trump Administration, in particular due to increased anti-immigrant rhetoric targeting newcomer students as well as ongoing state-level efforts to undermine the constitutional right to access a

⁵³ "Beyond the Border: Family Separation in the Trump Era," UnidosUS (2019), https://unidosus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/unidosus_beyondtheborder_22519.pdf; "Table 203.20. Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by region, state, and jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 1990 through fall 2030," National Center for Education Statistics, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_203.20.asp; "Immigrant and International Students in Higher Education", Higher Ed Immigration Portal, (2022) <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/national/national-data/>

⁵⁴ Michael B. Horn, Julia Freeland, and Stuart M. Butler, "Schools as Community Hubs: Integrating Support Services to Drive Educational Outcomes," Brookings Institution (September 2015), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Horn-Freeland-Paper-FINAL.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Laura Bellows, "Immigration Enforcement and Student Achievement in the Wake of Secure Communities," AERA Open 5, no. 4 (October 29, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858419884891>; J. Jacob Kirksey and Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj, "Immigration Arrests and Educational Impacts: Linking ICE Arrests to Declines in Achievement, Attendance, and School Climate and Safety in California," AERA Open 7 (October 4, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211039787>; Thomas S. Dee and Mark Murphy, "Vanished Classmates: The Effects of Local Immigration Enforcement on School Enrollment," American Educational Research Journal 57, no. 2 (April 2020): 694-727, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219860816>; Carolyn Heinrich, Mónica Hernández, and Mason Shero, "Repercussions of a Raid: Health and Education Outcomes of Children Entangled in Immigration Enforcement," Journal of Policy Analysis and Management (December 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22443>.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Meadows, "Undocumented and Under Threat of Deportation: Immigrant Students in the Classroom," Journal of Human Resources (Aug 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.0621-11738R1>.

K-12 education regardless of immigration status. Should the Trump Administration also rescind the protected areas policy that restricts immigration enforcement actions in places of learning as well as other critical places, that would create a severe chilling effect and make parents feel less safe about dropping off their children to child care or school.⁵⁷

Finally, a parent's detention or deportation often results in poor academic outcomes like lower grades and decreased school attendance for children left behind. Children whose parents were deported may have trouble focusing on school or fear going to school, especially if their parents were detained during the school day. Moreover, as a result of lower household income, older children may have to drop out of school to work and contribute to household income and/or have to become de-facto parents to younger siblings. They end up experiencing delays in or becoming fully disjointed from their own educational and career ambitions.⁵⁸

Immigration enforcement causes additional strain on providers and reduces program availability for all communities.

Immigration enforcement activities, especially when they are combined with other adverse policies, have a significant impact on providers serving children and families, including social workers, pediatricians, educators, and child care workers. Many were witnessing the direct impacts of trauma on the children they were serving and also felt compelled to try to answer complicated immigration policy questions or refer parents to legal providers to assist them, creating additional strain on their time and mental well-being. In cases of large-scale raids, schools and child care centers may also be left to deal with ensuring kids are not returning to empty homes.

In CLASP's interviews with early care and education workers, many providers expressed anxiety and concern in response to changing immigration policy during the first term of the Trump Administration.⁵⁹ One study conducted during the Trump Administration found that child care

⁵⁷ "Protected Areas Enforcement Actions", U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement <https://www.ice.gov/about-ice/ero/protected-areas>; Project 2025.

⁵⁸ Wendy Cervantes, Rebecca Ullrich, and Vanessa Meraz, "The Day That ICE Came: How Worksite Raids Are Once Again Harming Children and Families," Center for Law and Social Policy (July 2020), <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/day-ice-camehow-worksite-raids-are-once-again-harming-children-and/>; Laura Bellows, "Immigration Enforcement and Student Achievement in the Wake of Secure Communities," AERA Open 5, no. 4 (October 29, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858419884891>; J. Jacob Kirksey and Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj, "Immigration Arrests and Educational Impacts: Linking ICE Arrests to Declines in Achievement, Attendance, and School Climate and Safety in California," AERA Open 7 (October 4, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211039787>; Thomas S. Dee and Mark Murphy, "Vanished Classmates: The Effects of Local Immigration Enforcement on School Enrollment," American Educational Research Journal 57, no. 2 (April 2020): 694-727, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219860816>.

⁵⁹Hannah Matthews, Rebecca Ullrich, and Wendy Cervantes, "Immigration Policy's Harmful Impacts on Early Care and Education", CLASP, (March 2018),

and early education providers were struggling to support children and families who were under additional stress, including some who had experienced the detention or deportation of a parent.⁶⁰ Several educators were DACA recipients themselves and concerned about losing their own status.

K-12 educators are also impacted, reporting being overwhelmed with the impact of anti-immigrant rhetoric and enforcement activities before the 2016 election and during the Trump administration. They have had to increasingly manage anti-immigrant sentiment between students and protect minority students while also balancing their role as apolitical educators who serve the entire community.⁶¹ In one study, educators reported symptoms consistent with Secondary Traumatic Stress, putting them at risk for burnout, threatening the entire education system.

Immigration enforcement can also impact availability of early care education programs.⁶² Studies have shown that immigration enforcement reduced children's participation in center based child care programs, especially among disadvantaged children, including those of citizen parents.⁶³ One study found that enforcement activities decreased Hispanic enrollment in Head Start programs by 10 percent.⁶⁴

As a result of decreased participation, 46 percent of surveyed early education administrators reported difficulty meeting enrollment goals, further threatening the child care supply for entire communities.⁶⁵ The decrease in center-based child care availability and participation means more

<https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/immigration-policy-s-harmful-impacts-early-care-and-education/>.

⁶⁰ Matthews et al., "Immigration Policy's Harmful Impacts on Early Care and Education," CLASP (March 2018)

⁶¹ Maureen B. Costello, "The Trump Effect," Southern Poverty Law Center, (April 2016), https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/splc_the_trump_effect.pdf; Shena Sanchez, Rachel Freeman, and Patricia Martin, "Stressed, Overworked, and Not Sure Whom to Trust: The Impacts of Recent Immigration Enforcement on our Public School Educators," UCLA Civil Rights Project, (March 2018) <https://escholarship.org/content/qt0w65087r/qt0w65087r.pdf>.

⁶² Ali et al., "Secure Communities as Immigration Enforcement: How Secure Is the Child Care Market?," 2022

⁶³ Umair Ali, Jessica H. Brown, and Chris M. Herbst, "Secure Communities as Immigration Enforcement: How Secure Is the Child Care Market?," IZA Institute of Labor Economics (December 2022), <https://docs.iza.org/dp15821.pdf>.

⁶⁴ "How a Pathway to Citizenship Can Help Children Thrive," Children Thrive Action Network (2021), <https://childrethriveaction.org/2021/10/research-brief-how-a-pathway-to-citizenship-can-help-children-thrive/>.

⁶⁵ Rebecca Ullrich and Shiva Sethi, "No Longer Feeling Safe: Perspectives on immigration policy from early childhood professionals," CLASP (March 2020), https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020/03/2020_nolongerfeelingsafe_0.pdf.

children, including children of U.S. citizens, are pushed to lower-quality child care settings, which may slow their cognitive and developmental progress.⁶⁶

Detaining and deporting children has devastating consequences for their well-being.

In order to carry out a mass deportation plan, Trump and others from his incoming Administration have indicated the possibility of detaining and deporting children, even those who are U.S. citizens, with their parents. Research has shown both practices to have immediate and long-term harms on children.

There is simply no safe way to detain a child. After the controversial use of family detention to hold recently arrived asylum seekers during the Obama Administration, health and child development experts, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, denounced the practice for its detrimental impact on children’s health and safety, concluding that “no amount of time in detention is safe for a child.”⁶⁷ Research on U.S. family detention centers during this period consistently found poor access to age-appropriate health care (including documented deaths of young children due to medical neglect while in U.S custody), poor access to quality education, and severe harms to the mental health of both parents and children in custody, including disruption of the parent-child relationship due to parents’ limited authority in such setting.⁶⁸ An evaluation conducted by a committee designated by the Department of Homeland Security recommended the end of family detention and concluded “detention is generally neither appropriate nor necessary for families – and that detention or the separation of families for purposes of immigration enforcement or management, or detention is never in the best interest of children.”⁶⁹ Thus, any attempt to detain families together prior to deportation for any amount of time would subject them to these same documented risk factors.

We also recognize the risks to child well-being for U.S. citizen children who are forced to return to their parents’ country of origin. While we firmly believe in upholding the right of a parent facing deportation to make decisions regarding the custody of their children and whether or not to take their child with them or leave them in the care of another parent or guardian in the U.S., the decision to uproot a child from the only home they have ever known has severe

⁶⁶ Umair Ali et al., “Secure Communities as Immigration Enforcement: How Secure Is the Child Care Market?” 2022. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272724000379>

⁶⁷ Julie M. Linton et al., “Detention of Immigrant Children”, American Academy of Pediatrics, (May 2017) <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/139/5/e20170483/38727/Detention-of-Immigrant-Children?autologincheck=redirected>.

⁶⁸ “Family Incarceration Continues to Endanger Children, Impede Access to Legal Information & Waste Government Resources”, Human Rights First, (March 2019), https://humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Short_Detention_Report_March_2019-1.pdf.

⁶⁹ “Report of the DHS Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers”, Department of Homeland Security, (September 2016), <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2016/ACFRC-sc-16093.pdf>.

consequences, in particular when parents may not have the support in their home country needed. In many cases, a parent left their country due to increased violence, political instability, or natural disasters. Even if the immediate conditions are not dangerous, research has found that when children move with their deported parents, they struggle to integrate into their new communities and schools and face educational setbacks due to language barriers or enrollment challenges.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Ensuring that every child in the U.S. is able to thrive and achieve their full potential is critical for our country's future. While the incoming Administration claims that its mass deportation agenda seeks to target "dangerous criminals," we know from experience that any such effort will once again result in the detention and deportation of parents, including those who currently have DACA or TPS, with dire consequences for their families, children, and entire communities. In addition to well-documented harms of immigration enforcement that we have laid out in this statement, we want to stress that these harms are likely to be combined with a range of other federal and state anti-immigrant policies that threaten several rights from birthright citizenship to access to K-12 education, as well as increased anti-immigrant rhetoric—further compromising the well-being of children, most of whom are U.S. citizens. Ultimately, the failure of Congress to pass a pathway to citizenship will have devastating consequences for families who will be targeted by these attacks in the coming years. Therefore, we urge our allies in Congress to not simply stand by while the future of an entire generation is undermined and to use every possible lever to restrict funding for a mass deportation plan and to hold the incoming Administration accountable to its egregious actions.

We thank you again for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record. Any questions should be directed to Suma Setty, Senior Policy Analyst, at ssetty@clasp.org.

⁷⁰ L.E. Gulbas et al., "Deportation experiences and depression among U.S. citizen-children with undocumented Mexican parents", *Child Care Health Dev.*, (March 2016), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26648588/>; Zayas et al., "The Distress of Citizen-Children with Detained and Deported Parents" *J. Child Fam Stud.* (January 2015), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4667551>.