

Milwaukee Ald. Perez: Council unanimous in urging reunification of parents and children separated at the border

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Yesterday (Tuesday, July 10) the Common Council voted in unanimous support of legislation urging President Trump and Congress to develop a policy to reunite children and parents who were separated when they were detained while crossing the border between the United States and Mexico.

Council file #180486 (attached) details numerous problems with the “zero tolerance” immigration policy instituted by the Trump Administration that has separated at least 2,000 young children from their parents. It cites the multiple harmful impacts on the young children as a result of the forced separation from parents and detention in – in some cases – prison-like conditions.

The legislation states: “Prior administrations detained migrant families but did not separate children from their parents unless the adults were deemed unfit, which was a high standard to meet. The people entering the country and being detained at the border between the United States and Mexico are not illegal immigrants – they are asylum seekers. Claiming asylum is legal: federal law provides for a political asylum process if the seeker has a ‘well-founded fear of persecution’ in his or her home country that fits within specified categories.”

Alderman José G. Pérez, primary sponsor of file #180486, said he is grateful for the

full support of his Council colleagues on the legislation. “Seeing some of the sad video footage and listening to the audio of the cries of the detained toddlers featured in the news media has been horrifying – especially for parents,” he said.

“We believe that this current ill-conceived policy is cruel and doesn’t reflect who we are as Americans. The Council is now on record urging the President and Congress to do the right thing and put a policy in place to reunite these children with their parents,” Alderman Pérez said.