

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Joins senators to introduce legislation to keep families together and ensure the integrity of immigration laws

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and 26 fellow Senators today, introduced the Keep Families Together and Enforce the Law Act, which keeps families together while ensuring the integrity of our nation's immigration laws. The legislation requires that children and their parents remain together during their legal proceedings.

In addition to keeping children and their parents together, the legislation also keeps children safe by requiring children to be removed from an individual who presents a clear and present danger to the health and safety of the child, including: situations in which DHS cannot verify an individual is the parent of the child; a parent with a violent history of committing aggravated felonies; a child who is a victim of sexual or domestic abuse; a child who is a victim of trafficking.

“This bill would protect children and ensure families are not separated while their cases are being adjudicated in court, and would end catch and release of families at the border,” said Johnson. “But, the real issue at hand is a broader immigration issue. We need to stop incentivizing people to come to this country illegally. I hope that my Democrat colleagues in the Senate will take this issue seriously, and work

with us to find a solution.”

Background:

The Keep Families Together and Enforce the Law Act includes provisions to ensure the humane and fair treatment of migrant children and families by setting mandatory standards of care for family residential centers. Families will be ensured access to suitable living accommodations, food and water, medical assistance, and any other service necessary for their care.

To prioritize the timely adjudication of family cases, the legislation authorizes 225 new immigration judges and requires the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General to prioritize resolving the cases of children and families in family residential centers.

Unlike other proposals – which incentivize illegal immigration by codifying “catch and release” policies into law – this legislation actually solves the problem by keeping families together while also ensuring the integrity of our immigration laws.

Original co-sponsors include Senators Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), and Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Dean Heller (R-Nev.), John Cornyn (R-Texas), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), James Lankford (R-OK), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Ben Sasse (R-NE), Pat Roberts (R-KS), Steve Daines (R-MT), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Jim Inhofe (R-OK), John Thune (R-SD), Bob Corker (R-TN), Mike Crapo (R-ID), John Hoeven (R-ND), John Boozman (R-AR), Rob Portman (R-OH), and Mitch McConnell (R-KY).