



STATEMENT OF ALASKA CATHOLIC BISHOPS
BORDER SEPARATION

Their stories are horrific. They arrive at our borders looking for a better life. Unaccompanied minors whose parents tell them go, run for your lives. Single mothers fleeing with their little ones to escape sex trafficking by local gangs. Families and asylum seekers trying to find a better life, free from violence and extortion. The human toll currently happening at our borders is unacceptable on so many levels.

We, the Catholic Bishops of Alaska, stand in solidarity with Bishops from across the United States condemning this deplorable situation. It must come to an immediate end. Executive and congressional leadership must work together in solving this crisis.

As citizens of this country and as pastors, we turn our attention to the inhumane and disgraceful practice of separating children from their parents at the US / Mexico border. As of Friday, June 15, the United States Department of Homeland Security confirmed 1,995 minors traveling with 1,940 adults were separated from April 19 through May 31. Some of these children are as young as 18 months old. The lack of humanity is overwhelming.

We raise our voices in protest against such injustice, and join our hearts in solidarity with these immigrant families who seek only safety and asylum. We acknowledge the right of the government to secure our borders, but implore it be accomplished without damaging young lives or rupturing family bonds. A just nation can and must do better. This deplorable situation highlights the need for the leaders in our country to come together in service of the Common Good and reform our nation's immigration laws.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul D. Etienne".

+Paul D. Etienne, D.D., S.T.L.
Archdiocese of Anchorage

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chad W. Zielinski".

+Chad Zielinski
Diocese of Fairbanks

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Bellisario" with "C.M." written below it.

+Andrew Bellisario, C.M.
Diocese of Juneau

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roger L. Schwietz" with "O.M.I." written above it.

+Roger L. Schwietz, O.M.I.
Archbishop Emeritus of Anchorage