

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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### Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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To usher in the summer of 2018, the state of Ohio distinguished itself in vigorously enforcing the Trump Administration's zero tolerance immigration policy, and the detention of families. In the first week of June, 114 people were captured at Corsos Flower and Gardening Center in Sandusky. In the third week of June, 146 people were captured at a Fresh Mark meatpacking facility in Salem, the largest workplace immigration raid in recent history. Though the president since issued an executive order to keep families together within the detention centers, the damage cannot be undone and the zero tolerance policy is still in effect nationwide.

MSNBC reporter Rachel Maddows viscerally emotional [reaction](#) on live television as she reported the breaking news about the placement of young children into Tender Age Shelters in Texas, created a stir that motivated people to learn more and speak up about the atrocities being enforced against families by the American government. She was shocked and dismayed at the notion that human beings would do this to each other, and rightly so. Such widespread casual disregard for the lives of fellow human beings should be shocking and painful every time that we are made aware of it, however, such reactions occur on a selective basis.

One would be hard-pressed to find a reporter on any national news outlet reacting with such visible emotional turmoil when informing the public about the routine acts of brutality and neglect enacted against Black people, indigenous communities, and other People of Color consumed by the American Prison Industrial Complex. No tears were shed on any news outlet upon the national revelation that the [13<sup>th</sup> Amendment](#) to the United States Constitution allows slavery to continue within the United States for any person branded as criminal, nor for the resulting decimation of Black communities through Jim Crow laws and the War on Drugs. I can't recall any tears being shed during the 2016 Thanksgiving holiday when law enforcement attacked Dakota Access Pipeline protesters with high-pressure water hoses and dogs.

**This is the United States legacy.**

America was founded on systems that tore children away from parents, shaped from the destruction of countless lives and cultures, and sustained through empowering abusive individuals and organizations to take advantage of abusive institutions. Nobody wants to believe that their nation is representative of the worst actors among them, but it has always been so in the case of the legal institutions of the United States of America. In preparation for his plan to Make Germany Great Again, [Adolf Hitler admired and studied the Trail of Tears](#), an act of genocide inflicted upon indigenous communities by Andrew Jackson, the man currently on Americas \$20 bill. We carry Americas violent and immoral legacy with us everywhere we go and thus should not be surprised when history repeats itself. A nation unapologetic and unashamed about its genesis and perpetuation through the subjugation of fellow humans is a nation that will continuously fail to progress. The [1971 Stanford prison experiment](#) taught us that people given power over others, without tangible consequences for abuse of said power, will become corrupted, and the corruption will spread without intentional and decisive intervention.

**The time for that intervention is now.**

The public outrage at seeing and hearing young children being treated with such reckless disregard is completely warranted. While we process these reactions it is essential that we remember these injustices are continuations of the policies that result in mass incarceration, police brutality, and criminalization of poverty. As the guardians of the United States Constitution, we must reckon with the reality that the document contradicts its core values of liberty and justice by providing a means for the enslavement of fellow human beings, which we know to be morally abhorrent regardless of racial or cultural affiliation. When we allow the devaluation of human life to be codified into our legislature, we abandon our moral responsibility to ourselves and to humanity itself. **As we feel for the families that we see being harmed today, remember those among us whose stories of abuse and neglect have been unseen, ignored, forgotten, and often found justifiable. In order to effect positive changes in Americas immigration policies, we must tackle this brutality on all fronts and in all forms.**

When we fail anyone in our community, we fail everyone in our community, and to uplift ourselves we must not shy away from the unpleasantness of the past but learn from it to disrupt the repetitive cycle of destruction, and make our way into the future.

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