Trump administration defends missing court deadline to reunite immigrant families

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The Trump administration has missed the court-imposed deadline to reunite all migrant children under the age of five with their parents. Though the measure was a calculated and cruel political maneuver, the administration publicly stated that it could not release children because it could not locate or vet their parents.

Trump remained unapologetic about his administration's failure to reunite migrant families. Speaking to reporters as he and his wife jetted off on their trip to Europe, the President told reporters that he had a solution to the issue of family separations: "Tell people not to come to our country illegally… That's the solution… Come like other people do. Come legally." Trump also dismissed the claims that the administration's policy of separating parents from children has caused harm to the children: "We have laws. We have borders. Don't come to our country illegally. It's not a good thing."

In an attempt to tap into the legitimate and growing public anger over these inhumane policies, a number of Democratic politicians have repeated popular demands to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). In his conversation with reporters on Tuesday, Trump made it a point to defend ICE against the supposedly vicious attack by the Democratic Party. "As far as ICE is concerned, the people that are fighting ICE? It's a disgrace. These people go into harm's way. … So we ought to support ICE, not do what the Democrats are doing," Trump said. "Democrats want open borders, and they don't mind crime. We want no crime, and we want borders where borders mean something. And remember this: Without borders, you do not have a country."

The role of ICE in the continuing harassment of immigrants, whether at the border, at detention camps, at workplaces, and even at immigrants' homes is well documented. The agency, with its expanding budget, manpower and militarized nature, is the American Gestapo, paving the way for an attack on the rights of all workers, immigrant and nonimmigrant alike.

However, the Democratic Party's stance on the agency is a cynical and disingenuous ploy at blocking the growth of social opposition.

Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Texas), who is running against Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) in November's midterm elections, told a Texas radio station, "If it's reorganizing the Department of Homeland Security and changing the functions of ICE, having greater accountability, abolishing that agency altogether, that's fine. But there will still have to be enforcement of our immigration laws in this country." In other words, the Democrats want to continue mass deportations.

After all, the majority of House Democrats voted for the 2018 budget bill, which included a 10 percent increase in funding for ICE. Other Democrats have responded with open calls for defending ICE.

Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Florida) was unqualified in his opposition to the calls to abolish ICE, tweeting: "We [should] not abolish ICE." Congresswoman Jacky Rosen (D -Nevada) said, "ICE does a lot of other things people don't realize," and that congress should instead "ask the president to stop his reckless and harmful policies right now." Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-Arizona), who is also running for Senate, claimed in a television interview that getting rid of ICE "isn't realistic and doesn't make sense."

In a recent *Washington Post* op-ed, Jeh Johnson, the former head of the Department of Homeland Security under Obama, reiterated this point: "The reality is that abolishing ICE is not a serious policy proposal; it's about as serious as the claim that Mexico's 'gonna pay for the wall.'"

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With the Trump administration’s refusal to meet the court-mandated deadline for family reunification, it is not just the 50-odd infants and toddlers who remain in detention camps. There are also the other children, who were separated from their parents at the border, and who are supposed to be reunified by July 26th. The fates of nearly 3,000 immigrant children remain unresolved.

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