



**The Grand Traverse Band of
Ottawa and Chippewa Indians**

Legal Department

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GTB LEGAL DEPARTMENT
FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: PRESS/MEDIA OUTLETS

FAX NO: _____

FROM: The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

RE: Press Release of letter to Attorney General Jeff Sessions & Homeland Security

DATE: June 22, 2018 NUMBER OF PAGES 3
(including cover page)

COMMENTS:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!

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The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

2605 N. West Bay Shore Drive • Peshawbestown, MI 49682-9275 • (231) 534-7750

June 22, 2018

The Honorable Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Kirstjen Michele Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Attorney General Sessions and Secretary Nielsen:

On behalf of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (GTB), I write to express GTB's opposition to the "zero-tolerance" immigration policy that includes the forced separation of children from their migrant parents when they cross the border. This immigration policy is evil. It represents the ugly and extremist history of discredited United States Indian policy by willfully destroying and traumatizing children who are the innocent victims of United States policy, whether Native American or immigrant.

Members of our present Indian nation are the descendants of children who were removed from their parents, their Tribe, and their culture; and forced to attend Indian boarding schools. This was a means of forced assimilation, and it destroyed the countless bonds of Native American parents and their children. Our Tribe can attest to the facts that the detrimental result of forced removal of children reaches from the past to the present causing continued pain and trauma. The effects of this separation include incomprehensible loneliness and helplessness by parents and children; and all of Indian Country knows this pain of forced removal. It has effected many generations of tribes, of culture, and of their children. And now we are witnessing this ugly and heartless historical practice again with the present "zero-tolerance" immigration policy.

Regardless of the arguments on the pros and cons of immigration policy, the U.S. should not be utilizing a historical discredited policy that removes and cages children of migrant parents. Just as our ancestors were taken as a negotiating tool in the legislative process to assimilate Native Americans, the current policy serves as a deplorable means of punishment to migrants. It is a thinly disguised horrific scheme to achieve policy objectives over the bewildered cries of innocent children.

The separation of children from their parents is so very wrong. In no other modern cases can a government separate children from their parents without meeting the highest standard of accuracy in finding that the parent is unfit or has committed a crime. The decision by the U.S. to

inflict this unnecessary pain on children and their parents by removal of children from their parents is against everything this Country stands for. Family is a keystone of America. We vehemently oppose the current "zero-tolerance" immigration policy of forcibly separating children from their parents, and we respectfully request that this policy be revised so that these migrant children and their parents do not have to suffer detrimental trauma that follows when families are forcibly torn apart.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "McClellan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Thurlow "Sam" McClellan
Tribal Chairman

Cc: GTB Tribal Council
Senator Debbie Stabenow
Senator Gary Peters
Congressman Jack Bergman