

# Hundreds in downtown SLC protest separation of illegal immigrant families

KSL

June 14, 2018

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<https://www.ksl.com/?sid=46343542&nid=148&title=hundreds-in-downtown-slc-protest-separation-of-illegal-immigrant-families>

Hundreds gathered in downtown Salt Lake City Thursday evening to rally against illegal immigrant families being separated at the border.

Demonstrators stood in front of the Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building and joined in singing “we shall overcome,” chanting “we resist,” and urging politicians to show compassion toward immigrant parents and their children.

“We cannot let this continue,” Mayra Cedano said in front of the gathering. “We need to make our voices heard!”



Amy Dominguez of Unidad Inmigrante said, “There will be no peace for the government” until policies change.

“Jeff Sessions, Donald Trump, ICE, the Department of Homeland Security — they want to defeat us, they want us to stop fighting for our community members that might not be able to fight on their own,” Dominguez told the crowd. “They must think that we’ll get tired of coming to rallies, get tired of protesting, marching, calling our representatives. They must think that we’ll stop and quietly accept what they’re doing, that we have better things to do on a weekday evening, and I’m here to say that that is not the case!”

The gathering was one of roughly 60 “Families Belong Together” rallies held across the country to denounce the Trump administration’s “zero tolerance” policy and resulting separation of illegal immigrant children from their parents.

Recently, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services images released to news organizations showed a facility in Brownsville, Texas, where nearly 1,500 boys, ages 10 to 17, were being held. The boys reportedly spend as much as 22 hours per day indoors, over an average stay of 52 days, before they are eventually placed with sponsors.

“I think it’s heartbreaking as a parent, as an immigrant,” said Maria Guizar, who brought her kids to the rally. “I showed them, actually, pictures of children in some of these detention centers and I said, ‘These children need help.’”

Demonstrators hoped their message will resonate in Washington, D.C.

“What would you do if you were in their shoes, in their situation — would you try to save the lives of your children and family?” Guizar said. “It’s not a choice — they’re doing this for survival — and I think we really need to see the humanity in this and really stop dehumanizing our immigrant community.”

