

## Policy

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separations are cruel, unnecessary and traumatic for children and parents.

Advocates said the immigration debate has intensified recently with the fatal U.S. Border Patrol shooting of a 20-year-old Guatemalan woman in South Texas and viral internet discussions over 1,500 "lost" undocumented immigrant children.

The children aren't really lost but might have failed to show up to court after being released to a relative or sponsor, explained Fernando Garcia, executive director of the El Paso-based Border Network for Human Rights.

Questions also have been raised about U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers posted at the middle of El Paso's international bridges in what some immigration lawyers suspect is an attempt to dissuade asylum seekers.

Last week, about 100 activists, residents and elected leaders gathered to urge the release and reunification of migrant families at an "Evening of Action" rally outside the El Paso County Courthouse.

Among those at the gathering were state Rep. Mary González, D-Clint; state Sen. José Rodríguez, D-El Paso; and El Paso County Judge Ruben Vogt.

The rally urged El Pasoans to speak up, contact lawmakers and donate money to organizations providing legal help to undocumented immigrants.

"Continue to stay outraged. We can't normalize this," Rivas told the crowd.

### Lawsuit against family separation

An El Paso case is part of a class-action lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union seeking to stop the separation of immigrant children from their parents.

The ACLU lawsuit says that hundreds of detained migrant families have been separated by the U.S. government for no legitimate purpose.

"This is unprecedented," Lee Gelemt, said in El Paso at a news conference of the Borderland Immigration Council, a coalition of migrant advocacy groups.

"No prior administration has systematically separated children, including 1-year-olds, 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds," Gelemt said.

"The little children, as you well know, are screaming and begging. Please don't take me away from my mommy and daddy. And they are being hauled off and being sent all across the country," Gelemt said.



ACLU attorney Lee Gelemt speaks at an El Paso news conference about a lawsuit regarding the separation of immigrant families. DANIEL BORUNDA/EL PASO TIMES

The lawsuit features the El Paso case of a mother, identified only as "Ms. C," who fled Brazil with her 14-year-old son and arrived at the U.S. border seeking asylum.

The lawsuit states that the government prosecuted Ms. C for entering the country illegally even though she told border agents about her fears of persecution.

The lawsuit states that Ms. C was held at an El Paso immigration detention center in September and was moved in January to a detention facility in Sierra Blanca, Texas.

She has not seen her son in more than five months since he was sent to a center for "unaccompanied" minors in Chicago, the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit also includes the case of a woman from the Congo separated from her 7-year-old daughter after they sought asylum on the California border in November.

The woman, identified as "Ms. L," was at detention center in the San Diego area and her daughter was sent to a center for minors in Chicago, according to the lawsuit.

"I want to add that the Trump administration doesn't need to wait for a federal court to stop it. The Trump administration can stop it right now," Gelemt said.

"The Trump administration has been saying, 'Oh, we're just doing what the law requires us to do. We are just doing what Democratic lawmakers said we have to do.' That is completely false."

On Tuesday, President Donald Trump blamed legislation passed by Democrats for separating families, adding he has started the border wall.

The lawsuit was filed in March in San Diego. Gelemt said arguments were heard before a federal judge May 4. A decision is pending.

A coalition made up of the Texas Civil Rights Project and immigration attorneys on Friday filed an emergency request asking the Inter-American Com-

mission on Human Rights to intervene to stop the separation of parents and children at the U.S.-Mexico border.

### Immigration offenses made top priority

Sessions announced the "zero tolerance" approach in April, directing federal prosecutors to make immigration offenses a top priority.

"If you are smuggling a child, then we will prosecute you and that child will be separated from you as required by law," Sessions said last month in Arizona. "If you don't like that, then don't smuggle children over our border."

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has said that its policies have not changed from those under the Obama administration.

But immigration lawyers and activists said that under the Obama administration, such prosecutions were more selective. They said that the Trump administration is using family separation as a weapon against undocumented immigrants.

"I think the common denominator in this is punishment, criminalization and now family separation as deterrence," said Carlos Spector, an El Paso immigration lawyer who often represents asylum cases.

On Tuesday, Ravina Shamdasani, a spokeswoman for the U.S. high commissioner for human rights, scolded the United States over the hundreds of children removed from parents who were jailed for entering the country illegally. She said border control appears to take precedence over child protection and care in the U.S.

"The use of immigration detention and family separation as a deterrent runs counter to human rights standards and principles," Shamdasani said during a briefing in Geneva. "The child's

best interest should always come first," Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, lashed back: "Once again, the United Nations shows its hypocrisy by calling out the United States while it ignores the reprehensible human rights records of several members of its own Human Rights Council."

"While the high commissioner's office ignorantly attacks the United States with words, the United States leads the world with its actions, like providing more humanitarian assistance to global conflicts than any other nation," she said in a statement.

"We will remain a generous country, but we are also a sovereign country, with laws that decide how best to control our borders and protect our people," said Haley, who is also a member of Trump's Cabinet. "Neither the United Nations nor anyone else will dictate how the United States upholds its borders."

### A mother's pain

Mariana Ibarra's voice cracked with emotion recently at an El Paso rally as she spoke of the agony of being separated from her baby held by U.S. immigration authorities.

Ibarra's son was 6 months old when she crossed the U.S. border two years ago seeking political asylum. She was placed in an immigration detention center.

"I was separated from him eight months, living a hell not knowing when I would get out of that detention," Ibarra, 25, said while holding her son, who is now a toddler.

"It is difficult missing his first steps, his first words, when you haven't committed any crime to be locked up," Ibarra said.

The Mexico news magazine Proceso reported Ibarra fled Mexico in fear for her life after denouncing corruption at a Juárez prison holding her ex-boyfriend. Immigrant advocates argue that while the incident happened under former President Barack Obama's Administration, the practice of separating children from their parents has become more widespread under the Trump administration.

"It has been two years and I still can't overcome the hell that ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) made me live here in the United States when I fled a hell in Mexico," Ibarra said. The Associated Press contributed to this article.

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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE**

The Socorro Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 19, 2018 in the District Service Center, Board Room, 12460 Hulen Dr., El Paso, Texas 79908. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and compares set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

<b>Maintenance Tax</b>	\$0.981640/\$100 (Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)
<b>School Debt Service Tax</b>	\$0.398954/\$100 (Proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)
<b>Approved by Local Voters</b>	\$0.398954/\$100 (Proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

**Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget**

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or differential in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	0.34% increase	or	_____ % (decrease)
Debt service	22.34% increase	or	_____ % (decrease)
Total expenditures	2.71% increase	or	_____ % (decrease)

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Section 26.04, Tax Code)		
	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$12,156,862,193	\$13,205,048,849
Total appraised value** of new property***	\$384,465,915	\$419,751,340
Total taxable value**** of all property	\$9,525,420,663	\$10,595,540,238
Total taxable value**** of new property***	\$395,358,703	\$420,343,541

\* "Appraised value" is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Section 1.040B, Tax Code.  
 \*\* "New property" is defined by Section 26.012(17), Tax Code.  
 \*\*\* "Taxable value" is defined by Section 1.041(10), Tax Code.

Bonded Indebtedness				
Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness** \$805,211,938				
* Outstanding principal.				

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates					
	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund**	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$0.381640	\$ 293154*	\$1,274734	\$2,698	\$6,181
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$1,018590	\$0,382440*	\$1,401030	\$3,030	\$6,195
Proposed Rate	\$0.981640	\$0,398954*	\$1,380594	\$3,064	\$6,221

\* The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence			
	Last Year	This Year	
Average Market Value of Residences	\$129,947	\$128,149	\$128,149
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$154,871	\$172,266	\$172,266
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$1,274734	\$1,380594	\$1,380594
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$1,396.89	\$1,555.48	\$1,555.48
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$158.59	\$158.59

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

**Notice of Rollback Rate:** The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is 1.420594. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the rollback rate of 1.420594.

Fund Balances	
The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:	
Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$55,589,970
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$13,923,271