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Support HCR 64: Texans Believe Jailing Families is Wrong

HCR 64 asks the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to consider and exhaust all alternatives before imprisoning immigrant families at the T. Don Hutto Facility, a privately owned prison in Taylor. **HCR 64 will:**

- Raise awareness about the imprisonment of immigrant families in Texas and the existence of alternatives to this punitive policy
- Put pressure on DHS to do what Congress said and implement alternatives to prison for immigrant families awaiting immigration hearings or deportation

Who is detained at T. Don Hutto? There are about 400 people in the facility, over half are children. Many families are asylum seekers. None face criminal charges. There are many young children, including infants and toddlers. There are families from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Some families were arrested at the border and others were arrested at their homes inside the U.S.

About the T. Don Hutto Facility. The facility was built as a prison and has the capacity to house 512 people. The prison is divided into “pods” that are made up of cells with two metal bunks and a toilet, and a central dayroom. Since May 2006, the facility has been used to detain immigrant families, mainly women and children, who are awaiting immigration hearings or travel documents to finalize their deportation.

Detainees have reported poor conditions at the facility, including lack of medical or mental health care, inedible food, inadequate education, minimal recreation time and hostile treatment by guards. Specific complaints include:

- The mother of an infant not able to take her baby outside in the sunlight for over a month
- A pregnant mother terrified to give birth in the facility
- Threats by guards to separate children from their mother as punishment for violating rules by playing too loudly or fighting with siblings
- Infants kept on formula and not weaned to solid foods at the appropriate time
- Families given 15 to 20 minutes to eat meals, so that children who are slow eaters have difficulty finishing their meals and getting sufficient nutrition

What are the alternatives? Congress encouraged DHS to (1) release families, (2) permit families to participate in an intensive supervision program called “ISAP,” or (3) “if detention is necessary, to house these families together in non-penal, homelike environments.” **HCR 64 affirms Congress’ intent that these families be kept together but not in prison.**