

MARTIN O'MALLEY

BALTIMORE, MD

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

December 30, 2015

Secretary Johnson—

I am deeply concerned by [recent news reports](#) that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is planning a series of raids to deport families who risked their lives to flee violence, drug gangs, and death in Central America.

If these reports are true, they raise serious questions about due process for people seeking asylum, and these raids promise to needlessly rip apart more families and communities.

I am writing to respectfully request that DHS reconsider this approach and instead look for ways to humanely treat people seeking refuge and to [greatly improve the legal due process necessary for asylum](#).

When, in 2014, tens of thousands of children made the journey to escape death gangs in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, we called on Marylanders to step up and help accommodate them. Maryland took action to safeguard more refugee kids on a [per-capita basis](#) than any other state in the nation. Thousands of families opened their homes as foster families. We [recruited pro-bono legal help for case preparation](#). And we did all of this at minimal cost to the taxpayer.

Sometimes there appears to be only two speeds in government: on and off. When it comes to life and death matters—keeping families together and offering refuge to people fleeing violence—we need to take a more balanced approach- one that is guided by our values and character as a nation.

Forced deportations of unaccompanied refugee minors and refugee families should be a last resort when it comes to women and children fleeing violence. It is my sincere belief that our nation can handle this situation in a more rational, fair, and humane manner.

Thank You,



Governor Martin O'Malley