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Contact: Walker Gunning, Graham West

Truman Project Chicago Chapter Calls on Governor Rauner to Refuse to Send Illinois National Guard to the Southern Border

Chicago, IL — Today, the Truman National Security Project's Chicago Chapter called on Governor Rauner to refuse any involvement of Illinois National Guard troops on the southern border of the United States in response to the Trump Administration's increasingly draconian immigration policies.

Walker Gunning, the Chicago Chapter Co-Director said: "Sending our troops to the Mexican border is a misuse of the Illinois National Guard, who are not a tool to enforce brutal policies or score political points. Separating children from their families, or holding immigrants indefinitely is not in the interest of our national security and does not make Illinois any safer. We ask Governor Rauner to stand with American values and commit to refusing to send troops, even if requested by the administration."

Truman is a nationwide membership of diverse leaders inspired to serve in the aftermath of 9/11 and committed to shaping and advocating for tough, smart national security solutions. The full text of the open letter sent to Governor Rauner is below.

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June 25, 2018

The Honorable Bruce Rauner
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Rauner,

As members of the Truman National Security Project's Chicago Chapter—including national security policy experts, political professionals, military veterans, and civilians who have served on the frontlines of conflict zones around the world—we are writing to urge you to stand against the Trump Administration's draconian immigration policy specifically by refusing to send National Guard personnel and material from the southern border.

The past few weeks have seen upheaval and outrage as a particularly harmful policy enacted by the Trump Administration has resulted in the devastating separation of families. In April, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a "zero tolerance policy," which focused on charging more people with illegal entry; since those charged are then sent to

federal prison where their children cannot join them, more than 2,300 children were consequently separated from their parents.

Though the president signed an executive order regarding the issue this week, it actually worsens the situation by calling for *entire families* to be kept in detention facilities indefinitely while awaiting prosecution. This latest executive order also does not end the zero tolerance policy, failed to address how the administration will reconnect the thousands of children already separated from their parents, and directs the Department of Defense to aid in running these new facilities.

In opposition to these and other policy failures, multiple governors have rightly chosen to withhold or recall their National Guard troops from border deployments, whether those deployments were urged by the Trump Administration or not. Given President Trump's failure to address these crises of his own making, we urge you to refuse the National Guard to be sent to the border so as to carry out any more of the administration's cruel and ineffective immigration policy—especially detentions at the southern border.

Our National Guard is made up of trained warfighters, not law enforcement or border control officers. They have too many critical missions around the world to deploy along a nearly 2,000 mile border; such a deployment is not an efficient or strategic use of people, funding, or material resources. Moreover, because units of the National Guard are made up of troops from across state lines but deployed to the border in different groups, these deployments undermine training efforts, unit cohesion, and readiness. Put simply, continuing to deploy the National Guard to the border will leave them with fewer resources and less preparation for lethal combat abroad and humanitarian work at home.

Moreover, our state's National Guard should not be asked to assist in any way in the implementation of policies that ultimately do nothing for our national security. There exists not a single national security argument for tearing parents from children or detaining families indefinitely—especially when those concerned are fleeing extreme violence in search of a better life. The United States has in place the systems and structures to vet those who arrive at our borders; those who do so illegally should be the concern of local law enforcement, not the U.S. military.

The Trump Administration's zero tolerance policy is a moral failure and abdication of American values, but it is far from an isolated incident. Since taking office, the president has demanded an ineffective border wall at the American taxpayer's expense, abruptly rescinded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program without an alternative in place, ended multiple Temporary Protected Status programs for people whose home countries are still devastated by natural disasters, slashed the number of refugee admissions to historic lows, unconstitutionally sought to punish sanctuary cities, and launched increasingly cruel and expansive immigration raids countrywide. This is all part of a coordinated effort to move U.S. immigration policy backwards, and our state should play no part in supporting it.

Please take action today. By publicly refusing to send our family, friends, and neighbors in the National Guard to enforce this and other Trump Administration immigration policies, you will send a message against these atrocious policies that do nothing to keep us safe and in favor of traditional American values of diversity, inclusion, and strength through moral leadership.

Very respectfully,

Truman National Security Project's Chicago Chapter