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Truman Project Seattle Chapter Thanks Governor Inslee for Refusing Washington National Guard Involvement at the Southern Border

Seattle, WA — Today, the Truman National Security Project's Seattle Chapter publicly thanked Governor Inslee for refusing any involvement of Washington National Guard troops on the southern border of the United States in response to the Trump Administration's increasingly draconian immigration policies.

In light of recent escalations, the Chapter additionally called on Governor Inslee to push against 1) the usage of military facilities as camps for undocumented Americans (or at a bare minimum that the state keep track of detained minors, provide for their well-being, ensure they are not taken into foster care, and spare no expense in reuniting them with their parents) and 2) abuses of 4th Amendment by Customs and Border Patrol against Washington residents using the 100 mile rule as pretext.

Truman is a nationwide membership of diverse leaders inspired to serve in the aftermath of 9/11 and committed to shaping and advocating for smart national security solutions. Additional information about the border situation, as well as the full text of the open letter sent to Governor Inslee, is below.

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Zero Tolerance Policy Worsens the Situation

Since April, when Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a "zero tolerance policy focused on charging more people with illegal entry and sending those charged to federal prison where their children cannot join them, more than 2,300 children have consequently been separated from their parents. Though the president recently an executive order regarding the issue, it actually worsens the situation by:

- Calling for entire families to be kept in detention facilities indefinitely while awaiting prosecution,
- Failing to end the "zero tolerance" policy,
- Failing to address how the administration will reconnect the thousands of children already separated from their parents, and
- Directing the Department of Defense to aid in running these new facilities.

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Since taking office, the president has demanded an ineffective border wall at the American taxpayer's expense, abruptly rescinded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program without an alternative in place, ended multiple Temporary Protected Status programs for people whose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.

In opposition to these and other policy failures, multiple governors—like Governor Inslee—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.

No National Security Imperative to Separate Families

Our state’s National Guardsmen 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; undocumented immigration is not the concern of the U.S. military. Increased militarization of the already harsh and immoral “zero-tolerance policy” is unconscionable, on every level.

Moreover, 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 nor strategic use of people, funding, or material resources. In addition, 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, deploying the National Guard to the border will leave them with fewer resources and less preparation for lethal combat abroad and humanitarian work at home.

Push Against Military Bases as Internment Camps

In addition, we are deeply disturbed at the possibility of using military facilities to house undocumented children, with or without their families. The Chapter asks that Governor Inslee works with Adjutant General Daugherty, Secretary Mattis and others to prevent the federal government from normalizing this egregious and unnecessary behavior. However, should Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) or other facilities house some of the separated children and families, any minors’ whereabouts, safety, and well-being must be an absolute and transparent priority.

Specifically, the state should work with JBLM and community-based organizations through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to provide health care, education, and mental health services. Until they can be reunited with their families, the separated children, in particular, must be treated with the utmost care, and not placed in the foster system. They have parents with whom they must be reunited.

Push Against 100 Mile Rule Potential Abuse by CBP

In addition, the Chapter is deeply concerned about an emerging abuse of the Fourth Amendment rights of Washington residents by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) attempting to confirm citizenship using the 100-mile rule as a pretext. As a governor of a border state, Governor Inslee must ensure that overzealous CBP agents do not abuse their power. Nearly 75% of Washington State is within the 100 mile rule. CBP should not harass Washington residents by asking them for proof of citizenship or detaining them at checkpoints or transit locations. Unchecked, carte-blanche questioning of citizenship can open the door to racial-religious profiling and violations of Fourth Amendment rights.

The full text of the letter is below.

02 July 2018

The Honorable Jay Inslee

Governor, State of Washington
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

The Truman National Security Project's Seattle Chapter is comprised of national security policy experts, political professionals, military veterans, and civilians who have served on the frontlines of conflict zones around the world. We write today to thank you for standing against the Trump Administration's draconian immigration policy by refusing to deploy National Guard personnel to the southern border in support of building a wall and separating families.

We are also seek your leadership in countering two escalations of this Administration's abusive immigration policies: the plan to hold immigrants and asylum seekers in custody at military installations and the abuse of the Fourth Amendment rights of Washington residents.

We are disturbed at the possibility of using military facilities to house undocumented Americans. We ask that you work with Adjutant General Daugherty and others to prevent the normalizing of this egregious and unnecessary behavior. However, should Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) house some of the separated children and families, we urge you to make their known whereabouts, safety and well-being an absolute and transparent priority.

Specifically, the state should work with JBLM and community-based organizations through the Department of Social and Health Services to provide health care, education, and mental health services. Until they can be reunited with their families, the separated children, in particular, must be treated with the utmost care, and not placed in the foster system. They have parents with whom they must be reunited.

In addition, we are concerned about an emerging abuse of the Fourth Amendment rights of Washington residents by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) attempting to confirm citizenship using the 100-mile rule as a pretext. We ask that you, as a governor of a border state, ensure that overzealous CBP agents do not abuse their power. Nearly 75% of Washington State is within the 100 mile rule. CBP should not harass Washington residents by asking them for proof of citizenship or detaining them at checkpoints or transit locations. Unchecked, carte-blanche questioning of citizenship can open the door to racial-religious profiling and violation of Fourth Amendment rights.

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

Very respectfully,

Truman National Security Project's Seattle Chapter