



To the Honorable Randy Fine
302 Senate Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

January 15, 2025

The Suncoast Jewish Alliance hopes you will use your Jewish ethics and values as it pertains to actions against immigrants. Protect Immigrant Families and Their Children

There has been a call by the Governor for a special Florida legislative session (January 13, 2025) to address immigration. The primary focus is to “institute the largest deportation program in Florida and American history.” The Governor wants Florida localities to enforce Federal ICE 287(g) agreements to complement the incoming administration’s announced deportation intentions. ICE 287(g) program requires state and local law officers to enforce federal immigration law at their own expense. Historically, the 287(g) program has been costly for localities, it has targeted people with little or no criminal history, has led to racial profiling, civil rights violations, isolation of immigrant communities, family separations, and has harmed the relationship between police and local communities.

As Jews we remember that the 1921 Emergency Quota Act and the Immigration Act of 1924 drastically cut immigration to the United States and resulted in millions of European Jews, among others, denied entry into the US

and, as a result, be murdered in the Holocaust;

Over recent decades, political rhetoric in the U.S. has turned harshly against all immigrants, not only those who have entered the country illegally or who are ineligible for political asylum. That political rhetoric begot policies that separated over 5,000 children from their families and put children and adults into cages, a violation of basic human rights.

People who describe immigrants as poisoning the blood, criminals, animals, and vermin, aim to promote anti-immigrant hate and are parroting propaganda used by Hitler.

Policies to round up millions of immigrants, including children who are American citizens, put them in internment camps, and then deport them, violate our Jewish ethics and values, are inhumane, undermine American democracy and our global moral standing. These children have the right to live in the U.S., as the Supreme Court decision “Plyler v Doe” has held: All children are entitled to the same opportunity to a public education as any other child.

Will the Florida State legislature be caught up in the politics of the moment or will they support long standing acknowledgement and support for immigrant families who contribute so much to the Florida economy and our communities?

We must say NEVER AGAIN to the rounding up and deportation of children and families. We must do everything in our power to uphold individual civil liberties and protect children and their families from proposed extreme deportation policies. We must stand behind established policies that have prevented the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) from entering our schools, houses of worship or hospitals.

We recommend that school districts, State and other local government officials, put together appropriate strategies and plans to protect students and require judicial warrants signed by a judge from a

US District or State Court to enter a private area like a school, hospital, or house of worship;

It is time to condemn extremist rhetoric and plans for inhumane deportation policies in favor of sensible moral immigration and border policies. Our religious ethics and moral code teach us to welcome the stranger and free the captives as a reminder that we were once strangers in Egypt. We must treat others with compassion and justice.

*The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself,
for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: Leviticus 19:34*

Norman Olshansky, President
Suncoast Jewish Alliance
Suncoastjewishalliance.org