



NEWS RELEASE
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**U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues Letter to Members of the U.S. Congress
Regarding Fair Day in Court for Kids Act**

Washington, DC — By majority vote the Commissioners of the United States Commission on Civil Rights (“Commission”), have issued a letter urging the members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives to support the Fair Day in Court for Kids Act. A copy of the letter can be viewed here: http://www.usccr.gov/correspd/PR_FairDayinCourtforKid.pdf.

In September of 2015, the Commission issued its report “[With Liberty and Justice for All: The State of Civil Rights at Immigration Detention Facilities](#)”. The report found that no requirement exists for children to be represented by counsel in immigration proceedings. As a result, vulnerable minors seeking asylum from dangerous conditions in Central America are forced to navigate complex immigration proceedings entirely on their own. Without counsel, few children have managed to attain asylum and escape the violence of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The Fair Day in Court for Kids Act would grant children in immigration proceedings representation by qualified counsel, someone to champion their rights.

On behalf of a majority of the Commission, Chairman Martin R. Castro stated, “We are pleased that this bill proposed by Sen. Harry Reid addresses our recommendation on provision of counsel for Central American refugee children seeking asylum. Without counsel, we will see more children deported and killed in their home countries upon arrival, as has been recently reported in the media.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about the Commission’s reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.