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GROUPS FILE CLASS ACTION CHALLENGE TO TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S TERMINATION OF HUMANITARIAN PAROLE PROGRAM FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN CHILDREN

San Francisco, C.A. – Yesterday, applicants and beneficiaries of the Central American Minors (CAM) Parole program filed a class action challenge to the Trump Administration's termination of this life-saving humanitarian assistance for Central American children, including the revocation of conditional parole for nearly 3,000 children. The complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, asks the Court to strike down the Administration's discriminatory attempt to deny vulnerable Central American children the possibility to safely reunite with their family members in the United States.

In 2014, the Departments of Homeland Security and State set up the CAM program as a dual refugee/parole program, in response to the humanitarian crisis for children in the "Northern Triangle" countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. That crisis persists today, with children from these countries desperately trying to reach the southern U.S. border to apply for asylum. Rather than keeping in place a program that processed children's applications in an orderly manner while they were still in Central America, and that helped thousands of children come to safety in the United States, the Trump Administration shut it down without any explanation.

Shortly after President Trump's inauguration, the Trump Administration secretly shut down the CAM Parole program and stopped processing applications, even as it continued to collect fees from applicants. Seven months later, it publicly terminated the CAM Parole program, including by revoking grants of conditional parole for almost 3,000 children who had been told they would travel to the United States as long as they completed all the application steps. The Trump Administration revoked their status en masse without explanation and for no reason. Some of the children had already completed every step of the process, including paying thousands of dollars for plane tickets, and had travel dates, when their status was revoked.

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This case is brought just as the Trump Administration is turning away migrants seeking asylum at the southern U.S. border and tearing apart Central American families who enter the country—claiming these actions are necessary to protect law and order. It is the height of hypocrisy that this same Administration shut down an existing, lawful program that allowed thousands of children to be processed for humanitarian parole in their home countries and to come to the U.S. through an orderly, legal process.

The plaintiff class includes about 3,000 children and family members who were conditionally approved for parole before August 16, 2017. The individual plaintiffs, along with CASA, are represented by the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) at the Urban Justice Center and Arnold & Porter.

J.F., Plaintiff who has lived in the U.S. for 20 years and applied to CAM on behalf of his 8-year-old and 2-year-old daughters and his wife, said: “I think that the President is trying to hurt Central Americans like me and my family. I am afraid and feel a lot of uncertainty about what’s going to happen to me here. . . . I miss the warmth and love of my family. . . . I worry about my wife and daughters day and night, constantly.”

D.D., Plaintiff whose daughter finished every step of the process, including paying for plane tickets to the U.S. and had a travel date, said: “I never doubted that my daughter would travel to the United States. . . . Her process was over. I never thought she would be affected by the termination after going through the whole process, after we did everything that was asked of us.”

Linda Evarts, Staff Attorney for IRAP, said: “It is unconscionable that, in the middle of a humanitarian crisis, the Administration blocked parents lawfully in the United States from reuniting with their children escaping the dangerous conditions of their home countries. We hope the Court recognizes the humanitarian importance of the CAM parole program and reaffirms this country’s commitment to helping the most vulnerable.”

John A. Freedman, Partner Arnold & Porter, said: “CAM was a critical humanitarian program which was illegally shut down because the beneficiaries were Latino. In taking these secret but shameful actions, the Administration acted in a remarkably cruel manner that betrayed the expectations of thousands of families that hoped to reunite in safety in the United States.”

To view the complaint, [click here](#).

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