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Texas Appleseed and MALDEF File Federal Complaint Challenging League City Resolution that Bans Child Refugees

First in the nation to directly confront municipal efforts to prohibit housing of child refugees

AUSTIN, Texas — A complaint filed today with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development challenges a resolution passed by League City, Texas, that denies housing to child refugees in their city. The complaint is the first action of its kind since jurisdictions in Texas began passing anti-refugee resolutions in response to the 57,000 children who have arrived at the U.S. border this year to escape violence in countries including El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.

Texas Appleseed and the MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) filed the complaint.

On July 8, the city council of League City passed Resolution No. 2014-23, effectively banning unauthorized immigrants, particularly child refugees, from its jurisdiction. Among other mandates, city officials voted 6-2 to use “any manner necessary” within the government’s power to keep refugee children out of League City. League City called on other jurisdictions to join them in passing similar resolutions.

“League City has chosen a broken, misguided and extremely disturbing method to address a national humanitarian crisis in which child refugees are fleeing extreme violence in their home countries,” said Deborah Fowler, deputy director of Texas Appleseed. “There are reasons that our country established protections for all children, including those afforded to Central American children under the 2008 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.”

Texas Appleseed and MALDEF submitted the complaint to HUD alleging that the City is in violation of the Fair Housing Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The complaint states that League City, which accepts and uses federal funds, has illegally discriminated against people because of their race, color and national origin, and has engaged in differential treatment of those who benefit from federal assistance — a clear violation of federal law.

“This complaint is a warning to other municipalities that are considering similar resolutions — cities can’t accept federal funds, and then use them to discriminate,” said Marisa Bono, staff attorney with MALDEF. “As complainants, we ask HUD to immediately initiate an investigation, require community-wide compliance, and put a halt to League City’s illegal action targeting vulnerable children.”

To offer insight into the United State’s historical and current protection of children, Appleseed’s national office and Texas Appleseed have issued a new report called *Core Principles: Child Refugees in the United States*. The report establishes three principles involving the treatment of children and the legal framework guiding those principles.

The core principles are:

- Placing children in danger is inconsistent with U.S. law and policy; indeed, we protect children.
- U.S. law and policy acknowledge children are developmentally different than adults.
- Children are individuals and have the right to be treated as such.

Key Links

- [Texas Appleseed-MALDEF complaint against the City of League City](#)
- [Core Principles: Child Refugees in the United States report](#)

About Texas Appleseed

Texas Appleseed is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote social and economic justice for all Texans by leveraging the skills and resources of volunteer lawyers and other professionals to identify practical solutions to difficult, systemic problems. www.TexasAppleseed.net

About the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

Founded in 1968, MALDEF is the nation's leading Latino legal civil rights organization. Often described as the "Latino Legal Voice for Civil Rights in America" MALDEF promotes social change through advocacy, communications, community education and litigation in the areas of education, employment, immigrant rights and political access. For more information on MALDEF, please visit: www.maldef.org.

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