

Question#:	1
Topic:	Separation of Families
Hearing:	DHS FY 19 Budget Request
Primary:	The Honorable Lucille Roybal- Allard
Committee:	Appropriations (HOUSE)

Question: Under what circumstances do departmental components separate minor children from a parent or guardian?

Response: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not currently have a blanket policy mandating the separation of families. When claimed-family-units are encountered, a custody decision is made on a case-by-case basis, established on the totality of circumstances. However, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is not always able to verify claims of familial relationship due to the difficulty in collecting biometrics that would conclusively prove parentage, such as DNA.

To this end, family separation may occur during lawful DHS law enforcement and immigration enforcement activities, including when adult family members are subject to criminal prosecution, and when custody and parentage cannot be established.