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Florida House Republicans Approve Governor DeSantis' Bill Targeting Immigrant Children and Families

The Florida House approved SB1808 in a 77 to 42 vote

(FLORIDA) – Florida House Republicans moved to [approve](#) SB1808 in a 77 to 42 vote despite overwhelming public outcry in opposition to the bill. The bill could potentially impact Cuban, Afghan, Venezuelan asylum seekers, Ukrainian evacuees pending DREAMers and TPS recipients, among others. It will mandate local law enforcement into controversial and ineffective federal 287g ICE contracts, costing local law enforcement precious tax dollars and undermining public safety. Orlando Democratic Rep. **Carlos Guillermo Smith led the charge in support of immigrant kids against the bill, alongside Democrats Rep. Joseph, Rep. McCurdy, Rep. Eskamani and Rep. Woodson**, who all filed amendments to explicitly protect immigrant kids, our economy, and local budgets. Republicans rejected all amendments.

From business leaders, faith leaders, and community leaders to former Cuban Pedro Pan refugees and retired law enforcement, a diverse group of Floridians are vehemently against this bill backed by Governor Ron DeSantis. Floridians believe in a state that embraces all children, and demand lawmakers address real crises, such as skyrocketing rents. Instead, Republican lawmakers placate to Governor's Ron DeSantis' future political ambitions with culture wars and tax giveaways to wealthy donors. Clearly unaccompanied children, alongside the churches and shelters seeking to protect them, aren't as valuable to DeSantis as pandering to Iowa's primary voters and the wealthy corporations and lobbyists who will help him get there.

The following is a statement from Isabel Vinent Co-Director of the Florida Immigrant Coalition:

“Children are children, no matter where they are from. They need love and protection. Sadly Gov Desantis has reached a new low, making children pawns in the political game of his presidential ambitions. It is shameful that he would bully children and child advocates. Attacking refugee children is a new, cruel low even for Florida's legislature. That's not who we are. We are grateful for the hundreds of faith and moral leaders as well as business leaders who stood up for these refugee kids.”

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We Are Florida is a statewide coalition of community advocates, religious leaders, service providers, unions and nonprofits dedicated to defending the rights of immigrant families across Florida.