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## Senate Republicans Approve Governor DeSantis' Bill Targeting Immigrant Children and Families in the dead of night in spite of broad opposition

*The Florida Senate approved SB 1808 in a 24 to 15 vote*

**(FLORIDA)** – The Florida Senate moved to [approve](#) SB1808 in a 24 to 15 vote despite overwhelming opposition from business leaders, faith leaders, community leaders, and former Cuban Pedro Pan refugees. While Floridians face real crises such as skyrocketing rents, legislative leadership are instead placating to Governor’s Ron DeSantis’ future political ambitions with culture wars and tax giveaways to wealthy donors. SB1808 bill would mandate anti-immigrant policies, including those under SB 168, which was found unconstitutional and racially motivated in a federal court; establish new costly mandates on local law enforcement; and expand the governor’s executive action targeting unaccompanied immigrant children, impacting many categories of immigrants including Ukrainian and Afghan asylum-seekers.

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

*“Although this is another blow for our communities, we are standing on the right side of history alongside community members, service providers, former Pedro Pan refugees, faith communities and business leaders, all advocating for Florida’s children. All children are worthy of love and protection, no matter where they come from. This is just more of the same shameful cruelty. This is a crass political move that does nothing for the welfare of children nor for Floridians. It is*

*shameful to see what is coming out of this legislature, in spite of the broad opposition: a total failure to our democratic process.”*

***The following is a statement from Elena Garcia, a Cuban Peter Pan Refugee:***

*“I identify with the children who have arrived and are arriving at the US Southern border today and especially with those who are then sent to Florida to reunite with family. I imagine the angst their parents must feel when they have felt compelled to make the same decision my parents made more than sixty years ago. I relive the extreme homesickness I felt when I first arrived in the United States when I hear stories of the unaccompanied minors arriving today. I wish this were not happening, but it is.”*

***The following is a statement from Angie Fernandez, a Cuban Peter Pan Refugee:***

*“The common carrier provision of HB1355/SB1808 would prevent these kinds of shelters from helping immigrant children, just like the children who came through Pedro Pan. Governor DeSantis needs to put a face and a story to the hundreds of thousands of children from a diversity of countries who come here unaccompanied, just like I did escaping torture, famine and persecution in the hope to encounter human sustenance and support to be able to survive and to thrive under the compassionate heart of the United States and Catholic Charities.”*

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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.*