

Dear Ivanka,

You are in a unique position as both the daughter of the President and also as a member of his administration. As such, you have been held responsible for decisions your father has made as President that other children of the President have not. When your father was elected, you indicated that you would be a voice for women in the White House. That is why women appeal to you again and again in response to policy decisions made by your father that directly harm women and why you receive criticism when you fail to act. I imagine that as a self-identified feminist and mother you feel conflicted at times by your father's decisions even as you continue to deeply love him. And that the criticisms of you seem unwarranted. And yet, the truth is you do have a particular capacity to influence your father's decisions. That is why I am appealing to you now.

At this very moment, hundreds of mothers and children are separated from one another by a truly unconscionable decision of your father's administration to separate children from their parents when coming to this country fleeing violence and seeking asylum. These children, some as young as 53 weeks old, do not know if they will ever see their mothers or fathers again and are being warehoused in cages with metallic blankets. I am writing to you as a Jewish mother who cannot imagine having my child ripped from my arms after traveling through dangerous terrain seeking security and safety for me and my children. And yet we know that Jewish children have been ripped from their mother's arms in the past, never to be reunited. I have been sleepless at night imagining these children in a foreign land having escaped untold horrors in their home countries, lost and confused not knowing if they will ever see their parents again and no one can reassure them that they will.

Ivanka, you are the only person your father would listen to and trust on this issue and thus are the only person who could have an immediate impact on this policy and thereby save these refugee children and ensure that they are reunited with their parents. This was a policy promulgated by Attorney General Sessions, who your father often critiques and challenges.

Just take a moment please to imagine having your children, who you love more than life itself, being taken from you simply because you are legally seeking asylum fleeing violence and horror at home, leaving behind so much in the hopes of a safe life for your children. This is what is happening day after day at U.S. borders under the policies of Jeff Sessions. In the Biblical book of Esther, read in our synagogues on Purim, Queen Esther faces a similar dilemma, worrying that if she approaches the king about saving our people she might endanger herself. But Mordecai tells her, "*Perhaps it was for this very moment that God brought you to this position of potential influence.*" Ivanka, the same may be true for you. What is happening to refugee children and their parents is horrendous – surely you must know that. You might be able to change that, and I'm writing to you to implore you to urge your father to stop this immoral outrage. Please use your power of love and influence and speak to him immediately telling him to stop this policy and reunite the children and their parents.

I have no idea whether you will read this, but if you do, please speak with your dad now. I'd be delighted to speak to you about all this in greater detail if you have time to do so. I'm a family counselor, mediator, and collaborative divorce lawyer with two children of my own.

May God bless your efforts in regard to this rescue mission of mercy,

Cat Zavis, Executive Director, Network of Spiritual Progressives