



Photos by Todd Luck

Winston-Salem was among many cities across the country with a protest on Saturday, June 30, against the Trump administration's policy of family separation.



Jennifer St Sume speaks during Saturday's immigration rally at Merschel



John Thornton speaks during an immigration rally held on Saturday, June 30, at Merschel Plaza.

**Protest**

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expanded deportations. President George W. Bush made deportation a law enforcement activity with ICE. President Barack Obama was criticized for the practice of wide-scale detention of immigrant families, until it was stopped by the courts, and for record high deportations.

Maria Cortez-Perez, an undocumented student at Wake Forest University, shared her story with the immigration system. She said her mother, who was six months pregnant with her sister, carried her into the country when she was 2 years old. She said border patrol agents caught her mother when Perez cried after rubbing her hand against a cactus and began throwing up. The rest of the people they were with ran away, but her mother stayed with her and surrendered herself. They were deported back to Mexico, but they tried again and made it.

Cortez-Perez said she felt like a second-class citizen and criminal, having to find alternate ways to survive because she's undocumented. She's received protection from deportation under DACA (Deferred Action for Children Arrivals), an Obama-era policy that Trump tried to end in March, but court rulings against that termination have caused DACA renewals to continue. She said DACA "tokenizes you" since there are millions of undocumented immigrants it doesn't help. She said she feels like a "chess piece" under Trump, who's been accused of using DACA and child separation as bargaining chips to fund his proposed border wall.

"Those children, those families, they belong in a home, not cages, not prisons," she said. "Stop building walls between us; we are not your game, Washington."

Protesters marched up and down Fourth Street, going as far as the Forsyth County Detention Center before returning to the plaza. They were urged to keep pushing for change by calling their elected officials and participating in protests, like

the ones happening nationally at ICE offices.

"If this many people show up to change something, our lawmakers have to change what they're focusing on," Jennifer St Sume told the crowd.

The Trump administration's zero tolerance policy, with criminal prosecution of those who illegally cross the border, has resulted in well over 2,000 children being separated from their parents and held in separate facilities during the recent surge of asylum seekers fleeing gang violence in Central America. There's been widespread bipartisan shock and condemnation over images of children kept in cages made of metal fencing and audio of them crying for their parents at holding facilities they're kept in before being transferred to centers run by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Trump administration offered numerous responses, including denying that there was a family separation policy, saying that the policy acted as a deterrent for illegal immigration and Trump himself blaming a law passed by Democrats while claiming there was nothing he could do.

On June 20, Trump finally signed an executive order that kept the zero tolerance policy in place while ordering families be held together. As of last week, the administration said 500 children have been reunited, but when and how this will happen for the rest of them remains unclear. On June 26, a federal judge gave the government a 14-day deadline to reunite young children and 30 days for those age 5 and over. But after the families are reunited, the children cannot legally be held in an immigration detention facility for more than 20 days. There was legislation in Congress to address the issue, but the bill tied it to DACA and funding for the border wall, which was rejected by the House of Representatives on June 28. Congress is now on recess until July 10.



**TK KRAVITZ**

SATURDAY JULY 7, 2018



**DIALI CISSOKHO & KAIRA BA**

FRIDAY JULY 13, 2018

- JULY 14 JUICE (FREE SCREENING)
- JULY 21 ORANGE CRUSH GROOVE
- 9TH WONDER & FRIENDS
- AUG 02 GRANDMASTER FLASH

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