



Vision: we dream of a SD where the fabric is rich, diverse, inclusive and anti-racist.

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April 14, 2021

South Dakota Office of the Governor  
500 East Capitol Ave  
Pierre SD 57501

Sent via email : [tony.venhuizen@state.sd.us](mailto:tony.venhuizen@state.sd.us)

Dear Governor Noem:

SD Voices for Peace (SDVFP) is the only nonprofit in South Dakota which provides free legal services to unaccompanied immigrant children— children who did not travel to the border with a parent or guardian. Since 2014, [over 500 unaccompanied](#) immigrant children have been released to sponsors living in South Dakota, through a process overseen by the Office of Refugee Resettlement /U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Our clients range in age from 6-19 years old. The violence they have endured is something neither you nor we could imagine, but for looking into their eyes and hearing their stories.

These are children fleeing violence, abuse, and extortion. These are children seeking refuge in our country through a legal process – asylum. In order to seek asylum, one must travel to the border of the United States and ask a border patrol agent for refuge. This is unlike the refugee process. These are children who dream of going to school and playing outside without fear of getting kidnapped.

We ask that you recognize the trauma you inflict on South Dakotans through your bigoted words. We ask that you delete your tweet and apologize, specifically to immigrant children in our state. Through the strong community of supporters in SD, these immigrant children are on a path to a better life and will one day be U.S. Citizens through dignified and just immigration policies and laws.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Taneeza Islam".

Taneeza Islam, Esq.  
Executive Director  
[taneeza@southdakotavoicesforpeace.org](mailto:taneeza@southdakotavoicesforpeace.org)