Declaration of D.P. A#

- 1. My name is D.P. I was born on **Exclusion** San Pedro Sula, Honduras. I am currently detained at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas with my 9-year-old daughter
- 2. My daughter, and I arrived in the United States on June 7, 2018, and told the government officials who we met that we were afraid to return to Honduras. We were taken to the *hielera* (ice box), a government detention center, where the officers immediately told my nine-year-old daughter to go into one cell and me into another cell. There was only one other girl with my daughter in her cell, and I was put in a cell with about 50 other women.
- 3. When my daughter was separated from me and put in the cell she began to cry uncontrollably. My daughter was crying so much that the official called me back and told me to sit with her. I tried to calm my daughter down and get her to eat. My daughter kept saying that she wanted to be with me. I asked the official if she could stay with me and he said no because she is old enough to be alone. They only let me be with her for 5 minutes.
- 4. I felt very frustrated and felt terror at this moment. My daughter was so frightened that she was trembling; she was also trembling because we were taken to the hielera from having crossed the river and our clothes were wet. It was extremely cold in the *hieleras*. The officials did not permit us to change clothing. Not only that but the officials laughed at me and told me that there was nothing they could give us and that we had to withstand these conditions and that I should have thought of this before crossing into the U.S. I felt very badly when the officials treated us this way.
- 5. I was also very frightened because the other mothers were crying and they told me that government officials had taken their children and the officials kept telling them that they did not know where their children were.
- 6. From my cell, I could see my daughter through the walls but we could not talk because it was too far. I felt very desperate at that moment. I was yelling that I wanted to be with my daughter. I could also see that my daughter was yelling and crying. This happened for at least one hour. I was very distressed.
- 7. The cells were bone-chillingly cold. Some of the women had aluminum blankets to help with the cold, but my daughter and I were not even given those. One woman shared hers with me, but it did not help block the freezing temperature. I never imagined that I would be treated in this way and that the United States government would treat people in this way.

- 8. During this time, I had my period and was bleeding very heavily. I asked the officials for hygiene products and they would not give them to me. They told me that they had nothing. They said they only had diapers and milk for the babies. I felt terrible because I was bleeding through my pants and when I would sit and get up there would be blood where I had been sitting. I felt embarrassed and degraded.
- 9. After about a half hour, they took me to a room with two immigration officials, a woman and a man, who were wearing green uniforms. I spoke with the male officer. He told me to sign deportation papers and I said no because I was afraid to return to my country. The immigration officer threatened me and told me that I would never see my child again because she was going to be adopted. I started to cry when the immigration officer said this. He again told me to sign the papers, but I refused to sign anything. I was returned to my cell, and as I walked by the cell where my daughter had been, I saw that she was gone. I started to cry even harder and begged them to tell me where she was. They gave me no information.
- 10. I was crying like crazy and yelling that I wanted my daughter. The officials only laughed at me and told me that if I did not quiet down they would put me in a cell by myself. I was desperate. It felt like a nightmare. I had a chest pain and thought I was going to faint. If I could I thought about fleeing but knew I could not do it because I did not know where my daughter was. I thought that the end for me had come that I would never see my daughter again. I felt like I was not myself because I was so desperate.
- 11. I spent two more days alone at the *hielera*. During this time I could not stop crying and continued to ask anyone I could where my daughter was. I did not eat and I did not sleep. The officers kept yelling at me to stop crying and to stop asking for my child because they did not know where she was. During these two days I was also hemorrhaging and bleeding through my pants and was not provided with clothing or feminine hygiene products. I was ashamed and degraded.
- 12. I was then transferred to a cage at the *perrera* for one night and was then sent to court. None of the women wanted to go to court, but the **guards with green uniforms threatened that if we didn't we would never see our kids again**. Before we went to court, a lawyer told all of us to declare that we were guilty. The judge sentenced me to time served and a fine of \$10, and told me that I would be reunited with my child as soon as court was over that same night. That was a lie.
- 13. I was put in a van and driven to Port Isabel Detention Center. As soon as I entered, I asked for my child because the judge had told me we were going to be together again. The officials said we had to sign paperwork and told us we would only be there a week until our cases were done. I and other mothers kept asking for our children, but nobody would tell us anything.
- 14. At that moment I felt even worse. I felt hopeless. I felt that everything was done. I wanted to die because I felt that I would never see my daughter again. I was trembling and I had

chest pain again. I was also sick with a high fever and an upper respiratory infection and had difficulty breathing normally. I was completely unable to concentrate on anything. I also had hardly slept during the 16 days since I was separated from **Example**. I felt that I could have become mentally unstable and even crazy. One reason I could not sleep is that every time the guards passed by, I opened up my eyes and looked for my daughter but she was not there and I felt desperate.

- 15. I was given one, three-minute phone call when I arrived at the center. I wanted to call my child, but no one had given me any information about where she was or how to contact her. I called my friend who is in the United States to tell her I had been separated from my daughter. She told me that immigration officials had called her many times telling her to pick up my daughter because I would be deported, but she did not because she is not the mother and she did not want to be responsible for
- 16. When my friend told me that immigration officials told her that I would be deported I felt desperate. I was afraid that at any moment officials would come and deport me and would be left behind. And, I had seen this happen to other mothers who were deported without their children. I thought I would never see again. I felt that I would not want to live. I felt terrified and panicked. I could not sleep because the officials took the mothers who were deported at night. Every time an official came at night I thought the official was coming to deport me and I would leave behind.
- 17. I was very jittery. If someone spoke I would jump and got frightened. I was extremely nervous. The only thing I could think about was my daughter. I felt that it was difficult for me to really think and concentrate.
- 18. I also lost track of time because at this detention center none of the cells had windows that looked outside. I did not know if it was day or night.
- 19. The officials treated me and the other women very badly at Port Isabel. We were only given bread to eat for breakfast and lunch, and rice and beans for dinner. Every 15 days or so we were given a piece of chicken. The guards treated us as less than human. When we asked the guards for our kids they said it would be better if we never saw them again and that we should not try to seek asylum and should just go back to our countries alone. Some of the guards continued to say they knew nothing about where our kids were, while others told us they had already been adopted. I could not think about anything else except my daughter. I was constantly worried and wanted to know if she was safe. I felt emotionally destroyed. The situation I got in was a disaster. I always wanted to reunify with my daughter, but I lost control of a number of thoughts I had related to my daughter's wellbeing and her actual location. I felt like impending doom, and it was very hard to breathe. The disappointment and lack of confidence in officials and the United States where I had fled to save my life and my daughter's life affected me very deeply. My hands constantly shook and my eyes were swollen. My eyes were very dry because I cried a lot. My whole body hurt. I barely could move. I felt paralyzed.

- 20. At the jail I was in, they have papers where you can write to the officials. I wrote six times asking ICE where my daughter was, and I received six responses but none of them provided me with any information whatsoever. All it said was that she was not in a center. I did not know what that meant for her. (The responses were all in English and fortunately another detained mother was able to translate the documents for me from English into Spanish.) I repeat that I felt hopeless, lost, devastated. I felt traumatized and emotionally out of control. I wanted to scream and I could not, because I felt so much pain in my chest. I cried nonstop. My eyes were constantly swollen. Because I did not get any information about my daughter's whereabouts, my days were filled with constant fear and I was emotionally exhausted. I could not cope normally; many meals I could not eat and I hardly slept. I kept begging to let me know where my daughter was, but I did not get any clear response. I was told to stop asking and begging, that I had to sign papers and leave; I was told once again that my daughter was already adopted by others. I felt distraught.
- 21. After about two weeks, I was becoming desperate. Aside from the 3-minute phone call, I had not had any contact with friends or family since being sent to the detention center in Port Isabel. Making calls from the center is very expensive, but I had no money to pay for a call. I decided to work at the center. I worked for five days, seven hours a day, totaling 35 hours. I cleaned toilets, bathrooms, the rooms, and took out the trash. For my 35 hours of labor I received \$1 in my account and was able to make one 60-second phone call to my mother in Honduras. I only had time to say that I was okay, I loved her and to not worry, and then the call cut out.
- 22. After about 16 days at Port Isabel, I had my asylum interview over the phone with an interpreter. I did not know that I was going to be interviewed that day. An officer came to my cell at between 12pm and 3pm. It was in the range of this time because it was after my lunch and before my meal at 4pm. The guard passed me the phone and wished me good luck. I was surprised I had the interview that day. I was not aware about it. I was not told or prepared for my interview related to my asylum proceedings. The interpreter was not competent. He asked me a number of times to spell my name and other words. I believe he was not a native Spanish speaker. The interpreter spoke with the accent, tand it was difficult for me to understand him. At no time did anyone explain to me that this was my credible fear interview with the asylum officer and why this interview was important and what it meant in my case.
- 23. I did not know that the man on the telephone was the asylum officer and only realized this when I arrived in Dilley and an attorney with the Dilley Pro Bono Project explained this to me.
- 24. The asylum officer asked if I wanted to continue the process or be deported. I said, "I don't want anything, I just want my daughter. Please give me my daughter." The asylum officer said, "Ma'am, that is not my question." I just repeated over and over again that I wanted to be with my daughter. He asked me about my case. He seemed angry, which made it even harder for me to focus on my case. He finally said that my

interview was over. He then read me a summary and the asylum officer said that I did not qualify for asylum and would be deported immediately. I said that if I was going to be deported, I need to be with my daughter first.

- 25. I was not given much time to talk. I was not explained anything. The interview was very short. I believe the interview took at most 15 minutes. All I was thinking about during the interview was the time I can reunite with my daughter. During the interview I was alone in the room. The asylum officer and the interpreter both spoke in a hostile way. The cut off my words and questions. The asylum officer constantly raised his voice, and spoke in an impolite way. I started to cry so much that I could not speak any longer. I could not control my emotions, I was only thinking about my daughter. I did not even realize when the officer asked me different questions related to my asylum case. The asylum officer asked me why I left, and I said because I was threatened and beaten, and that is why I left. And when the asylum officer in response required to provide more details, I started to cry. Because I cried a lot, the asylum officer raised his voice again. Instead of providing more details, I started asking where my child was. In response, his said that if I wanted to know where my daughter was, he recommended me to watch the news. I told him I did not have an access to the news. And that is how the interview was ended. I felt that this manner of talking to me, was psychologically abusive. When I tried to get out of the room, the guard saw me crying and asked why I was crying. Then, he took the phone and spoke briefly with the asylum officer in English. I did not understand anything. I now understand that I never had an opportunity to fight for asylum case with that specific asylum officer on that day and that I was not in a psychological condition to do so.
- 26. Two weeks later, I was called back to the phone. I was told again that I had not qualified for asylum and was going to be deported. I was asked if I wanted to appeal the decision with a judge. I told them that if they were going to deport me, I wanted to take my daughter with me. I did not understand what going on. I was distraught about my daughter.
- 27. At Port Isabel, there was an officer called **1**, who people called the "deporter." He called me in to sign my deportation papers a couple days after I was told I did not qualify for asylum. I told him I was not signing anything until I had my daughter with me. **Started yelling at me saying, "You will sign the papers because you said you did not want to see a judge. Don't you understand that we don't want you in this country? You are all ignorant and keep coming." I did not sign anything. I was terrified because I thought that 1** might physically strike me. He was so hostile and I was by myself with him. He was standing over me, since he was taller than me, and he was trying to force me to sit and I refused. When I tried to leave the room he became very angry and got red in the face and grabbed the papers and slammed the door. Another officer, Officer **1** might physically that was ok.
- 28. A second time when I interacted with **second** he told me again to sign the voluntary departure. I told him that I would not sign and he grabbed the documents and crumpled them in his hand angrily and said "Fine, stay in detention sitting for a year waiting for

your daughter." This time as well I was by myself with

- 29. I felt that he was trying to force me to sign the voluntary departure and I was afraid that he was going to strike me. I even told him that even if he was going to strike me that I would not sign. He tried to physically overwhelm me and intimidate me by getting very close to me, but I leaned away from him and refused to sign the paperwork. During these two interactions, I was very scared. There were no cameras in the room where I was forced to interact with the by myself. I felt that if something happened to me, if abused me, no one would ever know. This terrified me.
- 30. The following week, after we had been at Port Isabel for a month, with no information about our kids, we heard that a White House representative was at the detention center. No one had given any mother information about their kids so the mothers decided we needed to talk to this representative. We had been warned not to talk to him, but we needed him to know what was happening. When the representative was walking through the center, I along with about fifteen other mothers, yelled at him to let him know what was going on. We said that we were the separated mothers, we had not been able to speak with our kids in over a month, and that none of us have information about where our kids are.
- 31. The representative told us that he would do everything possible to help them and that we should behave well, to calm down, and to cooperate.
- 32. The detention officers punished me and the other mothers who disobeyed and spoke with the representative. I was handcuffed and put in solitary confinement for ten days. I was put in a dark room, so I did not know when it was day or night. I was not given food or water for about three days. After about three days I was given bread. I guessed it was about three days because I could hear different voices when the guards were changing their shifts and they were speaking to each other in Spanish. I was handcuffed for five days and had to eat and go to the bathroom in this way. They did not give me toilet paper. I felt desperate and depressed. I did not know how long I would be alone, in a dark room without contact with anyone.
- 33. While I was being punished, the guards made a list of all of the women who had been separated from their children, in order to arrange phone calls. After my ten days of punishment and isolation, I was put on the phone with my daughter for the first time in over a month. Both of us started to cry. I could hear that she was sick. Because I was crying so hard the official made me hung up even though I begged her to let me continue to speak to
- 34. I felt both better and worse after I spoke to **Example**. I felt worse because she was sick, because she was crying, and because **Example** told me that I was already deported. I understood that someone had tried to abuse her by telling her that I was already deported. I felt much worse. I could not think about anything else except for the separation and what had been told to **Example** and the fact that she was sick.

- 35. I was able to talk to my daughter three more times during my detention. The last phone call she was different and refused to speak to me. She got on the phone and was crying, begging me to see her. She asked "Why don't you call? So many days had passed. The other kids talk with their parents a lot more often. You do not love me?" This broke my heart. This was the most painful thing that happened to me of the entire ordeal because my daughter had lost hope in seeing me and she no longer had faith in me. I felt that the officials and the separation had destroyed my relationship with my daughter and even today our relationship is changed forever. This has made me very sad.
- 36. Only on July 24, 2018, I was reunited with my daughter. I was put in a room with three other women. We waited an hour. One by one we were taken into a room with about 50 kids and immigration officers. I was brought to my daughter and we both started to cry. I held her in my arms and for the first time in over a month a felt a little relief because I knew my daughter was safe. I felt less pain in my chest, but the pain did not leave my body completely. Up to this date, I feel pain each time I go to bed. I am afraid to wake up without my daughter by my side. My daughter is scared to be taken away from me. Each day we sleep hugging each other. Both of us are traumatized. U.S. officials' cruel behavior leaves a remarkable impact on our physical, emotional and mental health. I feel very devastated and frustrated.
- 37. That day, we were then taken on a bus and told we were going to a church to be released. It was not until we arrived at the South Texas Family Residential Center that I realized this was another lie.
- 38. At the detention center, my daughter is terrified of our being separated. She does not want to be separated from me to go to school. I also do not want to be separated from her. At night we sleep together holding one another. I don't even go to the bathroom at night because I'm afraid to leave her by herself.
- 39. My daughter is afraid to even take a shower to clean herself by herself. I have to stand outside the shower to show her that I am not going to go away.
- 40. At night I am terrified that my daughter will be taken away from me. It is very difficult for me to sleep. I often have chest pain when I am laying down to fall asleep.
- 41. It is very difficult for me to be at the South Texas Family Residential Center. At any moment, when I hear officials coming I think that they are going to separate me from m daughter.

Ι, , swear under the penalties of perjury that the attached declaration is true and correct to the best of my abilities. This declaration was read back to me word for word in Spanish, a language in which I am fluent.

Signature

08/05/2018 Date

I, <u>theody a balance</u>, certify that I am proficient in both Spanish and English. I read the declaration above in its entirety to <u>the second second</u> in Spanish.

<u>Signature</u>

08/05/2018 Date

Declaration of C.S. (A#

- 1. My name is C.S. I was born on July, 16, 1983 in Guatemala. I am currently detained in South Texas Family Residential Center with my 17- and 15-year-old daughters.
- 2. My daughters and I fled death, rape, and kidnapping threats from a gang member in Guatemala. On June 1, 2018, I entered the United States over the border wall near San Luis, Arizona. We turned ourselves into Border Patrol as quickly as we could and told them that we were afraid to return to Guatemala.
- 3. The immigration officials asked me "Do you realize we are going to separate your children from you?" I asked them why. They told me that it had to be that way because I had stepped onto land that was not mine. I begged them not to do that to me. But they said I was not in charge of them, and that this was the consequence of coming to the United States.
- 4. The officials told me that my daughters were going to a shelter while I was punished for coming here. I told them that this was my first time coming here. They told me that it was the law and they had to do it.
- 5. The officials took us to the *hielera* and they really began to intimidate me and the other parents. My daughters were in another room, but I could not see them. I asked for them for six whole days but the officials told me I could not speak to them. Finally, I saw them through the glass. The officials told me they were being taken somewhere, but they did not know why or where.
- 6. I was put on a bus and taken to San Luis Detention Center with a lot of other moms. In the center we would all ask where our children were. The officers there would just laugh and ignore us.
- 7. Some days later, I was told we would be taking a long bus ride. I was transferred to Eloy Detention Center in Eloy, Arizona, where I spent the majority of the approximately 7 weeks I was separated from my children.
- 8. I tried many times to call my children at the number I was given by immigration officials. It was a not a functioning number. My family had the same number and it did not work for them either. Luckily, a woman who was detained there befriended me and complained until I got the correct number.
- 9. One day, I was told I had a phone call waiting and that it was from my children. My heart was soaring. I could not wait to hear their voices. However, when I picked up the phone, I was told it was for an interview. I asked if it was an interview with a social worker or to speak with my children. I had no idea that this was an important conversation that

affected my immigration case. The man on the phone started asking questions about why I was there, but I kept asking about my daughters. He told me I would be able to speak to them after. But my mind was totally gone. I was only able to think about my daughters. I had barely eaten or had anything to drink for a long time because of the stress.

- 10. A few days later I was called to speak with ICE. An immigration officer told me to sign a paper if I wanted to see my daughters again. When I asked him what the paper was for he hid it behind his back and said "It doesn't matter what it says. You are going to sign it anyway." He told me I would never speak to my daughters again if I did not sign it. He told me that because I was not from this country this was not his problem. I told him "I pray to God you never need help from another country. I cannot judge you, but God certainly will." He just told me over and over that I had to sign it or I would be deported without my daughters and I would never see them again. I bet ICE treats their dogs better than they treated me.
- 11. Finally, I signed the paper. When I did, the officials let me speak with my daughters. A social worker came in and put me on the phone with them. My youngest could not stop crying the whole time, because we have never been apart.
- 12. Some days after this some visitors came from the ACLU. They gave us a piece of paper telling us that we had rights, and that a lawsuit had been filed to demand that we get our children back. The visitors also helped us call our children.
- 13. After this, ICE was furious. They told us that what the ACLU had told us was a lie and that they didn't have to do anything to give us our children. They punished us for having the paper explaining our rights. The guards turned off our televisions and unplugged the microwave. They didn't let us go outside. But we held on to the fact that the visitors had told us about the national protests. I finally felt like I was not alone.
- 14. Finally, ICE told me they were going to give my daughters back to me. The officers told me I was going to be released to my brother. Instead, they brought me to a *hielera* and put me in a room with other mothers waiting for their children. There were 3 children there whose parents had not arrived yet. The officers asked us mothers to care for the children until their parents came. One of the little boys asked for water. We tried to gather enough water from the trickle coming from the fountain, but it did not fill the cup. We repeatedly asked the Officers for water for the boy, and they refused. The little boy was in that room with us for 3 whole days without water. I did not have more than trickles of water for the whole week.
- 15. My daughters finally arrived after three days. I was called to leave the room of the *hielera*. When I stepped into the main room I saw them sitting there. They both started running to me, and I to them. Holding them again was a feeling I can never describe in words.
- 16. My daughters and I thought that we were going to be released to live with our family, like the officers told us. Officers prepared and gave me my release papers. They even put an

ankle bracelet on me. However, the officers then took off my ankle bracelet and told me it was because I was going on a plane to my family. That was a lie. We were really flying to San Antonio so we could be detained again here in Dilley.



, swear under the penalties of perjury that the attached I, (declaration is true and correct to the best of my abilities. This declaration was read back to me word for word in Spanish, a language in which I am fluent.

Signature

<u>6 de o 30570</u>2018 Date

I, <u>llance</u>, certify that I am proficient in both Spanish and in Spanish.

8672018 Date

Signature

Declaration for J.H. (A#

- 1. My name is J.H. I was born and in 1992. Before fleeing my country, I lived with the who is the in the second se
- I am currently detained at South Texas Family Detention Center in Dilley, Texas with my 7 year old son, ______. We were separated for 53 days.
- 3. My son and I were taken into custody by Customs and Border Patrol on May 24th, 2018. They took us in the middle of the night to the "ice box" or *hielera*. They call it that because it is freezing cold. My son was hungry in the *hielera* and asked the officer for a cookie, the officer said, "Go inside and said I don't care that you're hungry, ask your mom why she is here and why did she bring you here?"
- 4. We were fed a small ham sandwich and juice and everything was cold. We had the same breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I was there for three days eating the same thing without showering or brushing my teeth. I was distraught and frustrated that the country in which I had sought asylum had treated me so unjustly. I was tired and scared about what was going to happen to me. In that moment, I was thinking that this was one of the worst things that had ever happened to me. I thought that this was trauma that I would never be able to forget. I could not believe that I had fled violence in my country and was only met with more here.
- 5. The next morning, the officers told me that my child couldn't be where I was and that my child couldn't see what conditions I was going to be in there and how I was going to look in front of the judge for prosecution. They told me it was only for one day and asked me to be patient. The guard said, "Grab your child, don't make this harder than it is, your child needs to go to the bus". My son started to cry and I began to console him and told him this was only for a short period of time and that I loved him very much. In that moment, I felt as if I was going to die, I could not believe that they were taking my child away. I could not believe what was happening to me, I was incredibly frustrated and incredibly anxious. My heart was beating really quickly, and I was made to believe that everything was my fault.
- 6. I said I was scared and didn't want to leave my son, but they promised to give him back to me the next day, so I tried to be brave and allowed it to happen. They assured me they would return him to me the next day. My son cried and cried and begged me not to leave him or separate from him. They took me to a bus and told me not to look back at him. It took a lot for me to let my son go, I was made to feel like I was an inadequate mother. I was scared and worried that I would never

see him again, and I was angry that the government had done that to me and had violated my rights as a mother.

- 7. After my son was taken from me, they took me to the "dog pound" or *pererra*. I was sent to the *perrera* for eight days, it was the same thing, no brushing teeth or showering for a full 12 days while on my period. I shared a cell with more than 50 mothers. We did not fit, so I had to sleep in the bathroom area along with other women. I slept on the floor with no blankets and no bed. I was disgusted because they would not allow us to shower and there was a horrible stench. The aluminum foil 'blankets' they gave us would not keep us warm at all and instead would give us rashes all over our body.
- 8. There were about 150+ mothers in my area who were separated from their children, just like me. I always asked information about what was going on and where were our kids while we were crying. The officers would make fun of us and one of them said, "Crazy women! I don't know why you're crying, you sound like Mary Magdalene." They would tell us we were annoying old women and that nobody wanted us here, but they were thankful because of us they had a job. I thought this inhumane and they were violating my rights. Not even in my own country had I seen something so inhumane. It was a horrible feeling, to be treated like less than human. I asked for the whereabouts of my child over 10 different times to 10 different individuals almost every day.
- 9. I was transferred to a detention center in Laredo after eight days in the *perrera*. We were in Laredo for another twelve days. Every time we were transferred, even though I asked, we were never told we were sent. Every time I was transferred, I was made to feel like I would never see my child again. It was psychological torture moving from place to place, I felt like they were transferring us simply to torment us and make us go crazy.
- 10. Laredo was horrific as well. They would always yell at us and were mean. The only improvement were the showers, but the food was horrible and similar to dog food. We were treated horrible by the guards, they would consistently yell at us, and would make us feel like were valueless. I was made to feel like it was my fault for asking for help from this country. I was depressed, I no longer had interest in things that I was previously interested in before. I was also very anxious, and had anxiety attacks.
- 11. Whenever I would ask about my child, they wouldn't give us any updates and said their only job was watch us while we were in detention. I was not allowed to take to the official at times because they were only available when the food was passed out.
- 12. I was then transferred to La Salle Detention. I was there for one month and two days. I could shower, but the food was terrible and they began treating me even

worse. I was told "motherfucker," "stop talking," "don't you talk enough?" They constantly humiliated me. I continued asking for and about his whereabouts, but they did not provide me with information. They said they had no information.

- 13. I did not have enough money to make a phone call. One day while I was in La Salle, I asked a friend to let me make a phone call through her commissary account. I was able to speak with my sister, who lives in the person who called her did not tell her where was for safety reasons. In that moment, I was distraught and worried that something horrible was happening to my son. I became even more anxious knowing that there was someone that was with my son, but would not tell my sister where he was.
- 14. From what I know, my son was kept at a center in San Antonio because they called my sister who gave his counselor's number and I was able to contact my son after 45 days of separation. The only reason I got this information was because they told my sister otherwise no officer would tell me. My sister fortunately put money in my account and I was able to call my son's counselor. My sister gave me the phone number of the counselor. I spoke to him three times before we were reunited.
- 15. The case manager in charge of states is case asked my sister to get a Letter of Designation so she could take care of while I was in detention. I gave my sister authorization to have power of attorney over my son and if she didn't have the monetary means, I authorized that my friend,

, be a secondary sponsor if my sister could not take care of him while my immigration case was still being worked out. This was for in the event my son was released before I was. This was specifically a temporary arrangement for before I would be released from detention. I was extremely depressed and frustrated that this was happening, all I wanted was to be with my child. I was confused as to why the government was doing this, I was confused by the entire process.

- 16. I was told that if my interview was a negative, I was automatically going to be deported, so I made sure my son would be sent to family.
- 17. My son's counselor told me that if I was going to get deported, it would be better to leave my son with my sister and go back to Guatemala. That was something that I wouldn't accept. My son needs me. The last time I spoke to the counselor was when I was in Pearsall.
- 18. I had my credible fear interview with an asylum officer on June 27th, 2018. I did not have advanced notice for this interview. I was not ready for the interview because I was confused, scared, and traumatized. So many things had happened to me and I did not feel prepared at all. The interview took place in a small room

where I sat alone, while both the asylum officer and the interpreter participated via telephone. At the time of the interview I had not seen or spoken to my son in over 30 days. I did not know if he was healthy or safe. He has chronic bronchitis and it was so cold in the detention centers that I was worried about whether he was sick and being taken care of. I was also worried about whether and what he was eating, especially because the food we were given in the detention centers for intake was so bad.

- 19. When I went to my credible fear interview I was so upset, I could not concentrate, all I could think about was my son. I wanted to ask right away about what was happening with him, but the asylum officer did not give me a chance. The asylum officer said "good afternoon" and then told me they were going to ask me yes or no questions and abruptly started asking me questions really quickly. The interview only lasted about 30-35 minutes. The majority of the time was not me talking, but the official typing my responses and trying to contact an interpreter. When they asked me at the end if I had anything else to say, the only thing I was thinking about was my son. I asked about my son. I did not think at all about talking about my own fear of returning to Guatemala.
- 21. While I was at La Salle, the guards told me to grab my things at 1 AM because I was being transferred. They did not tell me why I was being transferred or where I was going. I was moved to Pearsall for about four days. On the fourth day, July 17th, 2018 I was reunited with my son at Pearsall.
- 22. On July 17^{th,} I was reunited with my son, ICE showed up. I asked them for information and they said they didn't know anything. They were doing the most to reunite families, but they wouldn't give us any information.
- 23. About 10 women were reunited with their children where I was. There was one woman who had a baby that was breastfeeding.
- 24. When I saw my son, I was so happy to see that he was healthy. I felt a certain amount of joy in my heart that is indescribable. I was however, still sad and worried that we would still be jailed. I became extremely anxious thinking about how while we were reunified, we would still be caged, and we would still be experiencing inhumane treatment.

25. We got on the bus after we were reunited and headed here. My son was so excited when we got on the bus together, he was telling me about everything.

I, _____, swear under the penalties of perjury that the attached declaration is true and correct to the best of my abilities. This declaration was read back to me word for word in Spanish, a language in which I am fluent.

Signature

08/05/18

I, <u>and Mendoza</u>, certify that I am proficient in both Spanish and English. I read the declaration above in its entirety to <u>streme construction</u>.

Signature

08/05/18 Date

Declaration of Y.R. (A#

- My name is Y.R. I was born on 1984 in 1984 in Usulután, El Salvador. I am currently detained at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas, with my 15-year-old daughter, (A# 1999). Prior to our reunification, and I were separated for approximately 60 days.
- 2. and I crossed the border into the United States on May 25, 2018. We were apprehended and immediately separated while in custody in the *hielera* (ice box). I was placed with about 50 women in one freezing cell, with no places to sit. After about 8 hours, we were moved to another center we called the *perrera* (dog pound), but and I were again put in separate cells.
- 3. The perrera was just as cold as the hielera, there were no beds, or chairs to sit on. We were given aluminum paper blankets to keep warm but that did not help with the freezing temperatures. I was once again in a cell with about 50 adult women, and my 15-year-old child was in a different holding cell with other separated children. I was prohibited from speaking with her for the day that she was in the perrera. I felt very frustrated because I could not speak to my daughter, and I was sad and anxious.
- 4. While in the cell, I could not directly see the cell where my daughter was being held, but I was able to see the pathway to the bathroom from the cell. I saw her walking to the bathroom in the morning and midday on the first day we were in the perrera, and it made me feel horrible and without power or rights.
- 5. The first day in the perrera, I was taken to a room with an immigration official in a green shirt. He asked my name and if I crossed the border with my child. He was extremely aggressive and threatened that I would "become prey" and be detained for a year and that my daughter would be adopted in the United States. The officer asked me how old my daughter was and when I told them she is 15, he began yelling at me, saying why was I lying. He said that she is older than that and that they would investigate it. The officer continued interrogating me. When I told him I was from El Salvador, he yelled at me that that all people from El Salvador are the biggest liars, that we are worse than those from Guatemala or Honduras, and he again threatened that my child will be put up for adoption, I felt discriminated against because of my nationality. I felt scared.
- 6. I was taken back to my cell after this ten-minute interrogation and immediately tried to see my daughter. I watched, but she never walked by my cell again. I also did not see her during the hour we ate. I asked one of the guards where she was and he said he did not know and I should ask the people in green. So I asked the man in green where my daughter was, and he said that she was in "a home," and that she can't be with me right now but will be reunited with me after court.

- 7. When they took my daughter from me, the officers lied to her and told her that they were taking her to a house and I would meet her there. She told me she kept asking for me and they would only tell her that "your mom is detained," and nothing else. My daughter was very depressed and sad.
- 8. I was in the perrera for 5 days. The only food they gave me were cold pieces of bread with a slice of ham on top. I asked the guard where my daughter was constantly, but they gave me no information, no number to call, no location. They would just repeat that they knew nothing. When I realized they weren't going to tell me anything, I felt like my life had been taken from me. I never expected they would do this to me when I came to this country. They made me feel like I had no rights, that they had taken a part of me, and that they had shot me.
- 9. After I was moved from the perrera my torture continued. I was moved to my first of four centers. When I got to the detention center in Laredo, I immediately asked where my child was, but got no answers. Immigration officers came once a week to "answer questions," however they said to not ask about our cases or our children because they do not know anything.
- 10. I wrote ICE two requests each week, in every center I went to, begging for information about my daughter. They never responded. No one was telling me anything and I felt like someone had stabbed my heart. I was very sad and depressed.
- 11. I was constantly worried about and anxious for my daughter. I thought about her day and night, wanting know how she was, is she locked inside a center like me? Is she eating? Sleeping? Does she have a bed? Does she have information about me? Is she sick? Hurting? A million things crossed my mind. I would see reports on the news about kids in Florida and New York and I would agonize about where she was and if she was just as far. There were many days I could not sleep nor could I eat. I was extremely depressed.
- 12. The only information that I had was a number on a flier to get information regarding our kids. But, the phone calls were expensive, and I had no money. I would watch as other mothers called the phone number, and no one ever answered a single call. I felt desperate.
- 13. When I was in the Laredo Detention Center, you needed money to make a phone call. I did not have any money to call my family to try to get information about my missing daughter. You could work in the center for a small amount of money, so I worked from 1:00pm until 8:00pm and earned \$1 for my 7 hours of labor, washing dishes and cleaning. I did this for a week and was able to earn enough money to talk to my family in Houston for less than five minutes. However, they also did not have information about where my daughter was.
- 14. After about two week in Laredo, without warning, I was moved to La Salle detention center. This center was even worse than the last. The lights never turned off and there

were no windows so I did not know when it was day or night. Cold air blasted in my room, where I had been isolated. I was could leave my room to go to the common area, but I could not leave the common area. I had a thin blanket. I had no company and felt completely alone and scared. Inside I felt dead and I felt like I could not breathe correctly.

- 15. After about a month of separation and no information regarding my daughter, when I was at my most vulnerable and desperate for news, an official came into my room and said my interview was going to happen. I had not slept for a full night in a month, I had not been eating, I felt depressed. I was pulled into a room, alone, handed a phone, and told it was my credible fear interview. The interpreter and asylum officer were both on the phone. I could not concentrate at all on what was being asked of me. I could only think of my daughter. After one of the first questions when they asked me who I entered the country with, I couldn't stop thinking about her. When they asked me about my daughter, I felt like I couldn't talk and I had a lump in my throat. I wanted the interview to be over as quickly as possible because I thought I would be reunited with her after the interview. No one told me this, but this is what I thought.
- 16. At 3am the morning after my interview, I was taken from my room without notice, and transferred to a detention center in Pearsall for 23 days.
- 17. After a month and a week, of having no information at all about my daughter and being separated from her, a guard handed me the phone, and it was my daughter on the line. The guard stood right next to me for the entire phone call and said I only had ten minutes. My daughter and I were both crying and she said that she had been looking for me. She said she tried calling at other detention centers, but when she would call they would tell her I had left. She asked if I would be in the same detention center in a week because that was when she could call again. I told her that I did not know, but will hope for her call and that I loved her very much. The guard gave me a 2-minute warning, a 1-minute warning and then forced me to hang up. I felt happy speaking to her, but also very sad because I was only speaking to her. I was asking her how she was treated, how she felt, and if she was eating okay. My daughter said that they brought her to a house, and they did not tell her anything else. I talked to her twice more, once in Pearsall and once in Port Isabel.
- 18. After 23 days in Pearsall, I was told I was going to another detention center. I asked which one, and they said they did not have any information, just that I was moving. I was put in the hielera from 6am until 3pm, without further information. I was finally told I was going to Port Isabel and would possibly be reunified with my daughter. I felt a little bit of hope because I was going to see my daughter again.
- 19. I was in Port Isabel for 10 days without further information. I thought after 2 or 3 days I would see my daughter again, but I saw other mothers being reunited with their children. I felt more hope each passing day because of the others who were being reunited.

- 20. I had seen on the news that a judge signed something about reunifying kids with their parents and I started to feel some hope. I asked the guards if this meant I would be with my daughter again, and they told me that I would not be reunified with my child, and if I was, it would not be for months. I felt like the lights had shut off on me. I felt like someone had hit me, and I was very dizzy. I almost felt like I had died when they told me this.
- 21. The day I was reunified with my daughter I was put in a room with about 40 moms. One by one, we were taken to a room where there were 30-40 children with immigration officials with computers and case managers. When I saw my daughter we both immediately started to cry. I felt like my life had come back. I held her in my arms, unmoving for 5 minutes.
- 22. We had been separated for 58 days. On one side, I feel good to have my daughter, but on the other side, the nightmare does not end because we don't know what will happen to us, and we are locked in here. I feel a little bit better, but it is the worst thing to have happened to me in my life. What happened to me was hell and should never happen to any mother.

, swear under the penalties of perjury that the attached Ι, . declaration is true and correct to the best of my abilities. This declaration was read back to me word for word in Spanish, a language in which I am fluent.

Signature

08/05/2018 Date

I, <u>JESSE Rachel BOQS</u>, certify that I am proficient in both Spanish and English. I read the declaration above in its entirety to in Spanish. U

Jesiel Boas

August 5, 2018 Date

Declaration of L.A. (A#

- My name is L.A. (A# ______). I was born on ______, 1981. I am originally from ______ Guatemala. I am currently detained with my ten-year old daughter, _______) at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, TX. We were reunited on July 23rd, 2018 in Port Isabel, Texas.
- I arrived in the United States on June 14, 2018 with my daughter,
 My daughter and I were apprehended by border officials after crossing the river.
- 3. On June 14th, 2018, officials told me they were going to take my daughter away and give her up for adoption. I replied and said, "No she has a family, you can't do that." They told me it was only while I went to court and they asked for the contact information of my friend, ______, who lives here in the United States. They called him and asked him if he would be able to take care of ______ while I went to court and then she would be returned to me. He agreed and said he could take care of her temporarily.
- 4. During the first two days of our detention, my daughter and I were in the "icebox" or *hielera*. They call it that because it is so cold. We slept on the floor and only had emergency space blankets to keep us warm in the ice cold cell. We asked for another blanket but the officer said, "You only get one, this isn't your home." They yelled at us and said, "Why are you here? This isn't your country. These are the consequences for crossing the river and coming to a country that isn't yours." There was an officer that said, we immigrants came here to take up their resources and that we came to live off of their tax money. The only thing we got to each was a small ham sandwich for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- 5. On June 16th, I was told I had to see the judge for prosecution. The officer told me they were going to take my daughter away from me. I tried to assure her that it was only going to be for two days and that everything was going to be okay. My daughter began to weep uncontrollably and began to beg me not to let them take her, she said, "Please mom, I promise I'm going to behave in court. I won't make any sounds, but please don't leave me, *mami*!" They pulled her away from me and dragged her because she did not want to be separated from me. I had never been separated from my daughter before this. I felt sad and alone because I did not know what was happening.
- 6. I was not told anything about where my daughter was going or when I would see her and I experienced extreme emotional distress over her safety and her whereabouts. Another officer told me that they were taking my daughter to put up for adoption. I became extremely upset because my daughter had just been abused, I worried about her safety and her emotional state.

- 7. On Monday, June 18th I returned from court and saw that my daughter was nowhere to be found. I asked an officer, "Where is my daughter?" The officer said, "You're going to another place, your daughter will be waiting for you there". When I was transferred, my daughter wasn't there. I thought they had already but her up for adoption and began to feel hopeless. I was one of many women who knew nothing about the whereabouts of their children. I asked an office who was nearby, "Where is my daughter?" The officer said, "No one had told us to come and that it wasn't their fault that I was feeling pain. We can't give you any information."
- 8. Another officer told me I was going to be transferred again and that my daughter would be there waiting for me there. When I arrived, I asked about my daughter again and asked if I could talk to her. They said, "We only know that your daughter is safe, but we can't give you any information. Someone is going to talk to you." The officers in charge of the center told us that they were not permitted to give information about our children and that they didn't have information to share anyway.
- 9. On June 22, 2018 I had my credible fear interview but was not able to fully tell my story because all I could think about was where my daughter was and if she was okay. My daughter was sexually abused before we came to the United States and is in an extremely fragile and emotional state, and I could not stop thinking about anything but her and how scared she must be. I asked the asylum officer if he knew where my daughter was, he said, "No, I don't know." During the interview I felt sadness and despair because I didn't have my daughter and I didn't know where she was.
- 10. Two days after my interview, I was told that I had failed. I took the opportunity while talking with an immigration officer to as once again where my daughter was, and the officer said, "I don't have that information and we can't do anything about it." I told the officer I did not want to appeal my case so that I could see my daughter as soon as possible. I thought this would bring my daughter back to me sooner.
- 11. Approximately around July 1st, 2018, I was able to speak with through a friend that let me use her minutes on her commissary account. This is when I found out my daughter was not with the told me the social worker had sent him paperwork to adopt my daughter permanently, not for my daughter to be with him temporarily. He said he could not adopt my daughter because I am her mother. I felt confused and sad because I did not know if this meant that they would let other people adopt my daughter. I was afraid that the people who adopted her would abuse her and that I would never see her again.
- 12. After 15 days, officers wearing blue uniforms came to talk to us. They said they were doctors and told us that they knew where our children were and that they were safe in a shelter about 15 minutes away from where I was detained. They asked us if we had talked to our children, and when I said no, they gave me a phone call with my daughter. When I was finally able to speak with my daughter I was overjoyed to hear my daughter's voice but I was sad because I could not hug her, I couldn't see her and I couldn't express how I felt. She wept over the phone and begged me to pick her up. She said, "*Mami*, come get me! Please don't leave me here!"

- 13. After I was able to talk to her, the people in the blue uniforms told me and the other mothers who had been separated from their children that we had the right to two phone calls a week with our children. The following week I spoke to my daughter twice. The calls were monitored each time we talked. The first call that week was 20 minutes long and the second was about 10 minutes long. When we talked I was worried that she couldn't express herself truthfully on the phone because they were listening to her while she talked with me. After these calls, I spoke with my daughter one more time before our reunification.
- 14. The people in the blue uniforms said they were working to make sure that I was reunited with my daughter. They talked to me every day. They told me there were two options. If I were to be deported, my daughter could return with me and if I wanted to fight my case she could stay with me too. I chose the option to always be together no matter what, "always together" or *unidas siempre*.
- 15. I signed about 10 pages of documents for my daughter and I to be reunited. I don't know what all of the documents said. I was told that I had to fill out all of them in order to be reunited with my daughter.
- 16. On July 22nd I was called at 7PM and was told that I would be reunited with my daughter. They asked me to grab my things. I was reunited with my daughter at about 1 AM on July 23rd, 2018. When I saw my daughter again, it was one of the happiest moments of my life. I felt like I was whole again after they brought her to me. We had been separated approximately 35 days. We embraced each other, she hugged me and kissed me and kept saying how much she loved me. We were later transferred to South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, TX.
- 17. My daughter is extremely traumatized and does not want to speak about her experiences. She does not want to be away from me. If I need to speak with an attorney in private, she begins to cry at the thought of being separated once again.
- 18. This was the worst thing that has ever happened to me. Being separated from my daughter and knowing nothing about her whereabouts has caused extreme trauma for both me and my daughter. My daughter is so desperate to get out, she always asks me when we're going to be able to leave this center. This trauma has begun to impact our physical health, we are unable to sleep or eat and I constantly have a headache.

I, swear under the penalties of perjury that the attached declaration is true and correct to the best of my abilities. This declaration was read back to me word for word in Spanish, a language in which I am fluent.

Signature

<u>8-15-18</u> Date

I, $\underline{MMISSA OMELAS}$, certify that I am proficient in both Spanish and English. I read the declaration above in its entirety to in Spanish.

Marisi Oml

Signature

<u>08/05/18</u> Date

Declaration of M.H. (A#

- 1. My name is M.H. I was born in 1988, in Honduras. I am currently detained in South Texas Family Residential Center with my 13-year old son.
- 2. My son and I fled death threats from a gang in Honduras to seek asylum in the United States. I entered the country near Hidalgo, Texas on May 25, 2018. We walked for about 20 minutes. Immigration officials found us and told me to kneel and put my arms behind my back. They told me to take off my shoes. They told my son to sit on the ground. I stayed kneeling for about 30 minutes before they finally let me sit. They looked at all of my documents and they told me "You are going to be separated." They put us on a big bus and they drove us to the *hielera*.
- 3. When we got to the *hielera*, the officials put my son in another room for three days. It was very cold. I was worried because he has asthma and ca not breath well.
- 4. They moved us to another *hielera* for 3 days. My son was still in another room. I had no idea what was going on.
- 5. After those 6 days they took us to a big place with chain fences that divided the room into pens. My son was there, but he was in another pen. The officer told me "You are going to be deported, and your son is going to be placed for adoption." Then he told all of the women to say goodbye to our children. We were distraught.
- 6. Next, the officials took about 30 moms into a courtroom. There was a judge in a black robe, a translator, and a lawyer. The lawyer told us to say we were all guilty. She tricked us into saying this and never explained what it meant. I realize now that she was there to help the judge and not to help me.
- 7. The judge told us that our children were going to be taken away from us and sent to adoption in Miami and New York. I was trembling, and everyone was crying. There were fathers there too. Some of them fell to their knees crying over their children. After court, the lawyer told us that there would be a number we could call because our children would be put into adoption. They had us in chains that went around our waist connected to handcuffs, and our feet were chained as well.
- 8. When I came back from court I looked at the pen where the children had been. It was totally clean and empty. All of us started to ask where our children were. The officials told us that they were putting them up for adoption. They did not give us any information. I was totally traumatized, and I had dreams at night that my son was being kidnapped by men who were going to kill him.

- 9. The officers threw us little sandwiches but I could not eat them. The officers would not let us ask them anything. They refused to tell us anything, or they would just say that our children had been placed in adoption. It was anguish.
- 10. I found out later that my son was told I would be meeting him somewhere shortly after, and that we would be together. They lied to him to get him to go without me.
- 11. The officials took me to a detention center in Laredo where I was detained for 13 days. The women who were my guards would ignore everything I asked for and told me it was not their problem. Then they took us to La Salle Detention Center in Louisiana.
- 12. After about a month without hearing from my son I became totally depressed. I could not look out a window. They did not take us outside. I never got any information about my son, and I was totally desperate. I would not eat.
- 13. I cried all the time, and one of the guards in La Salle would come by and bang on my window. She said "Shut up you *hija de la madre*!" I told her, "I am crying over my son." She just told me to shut up. I was in prison.
- 14. During this time of despair, I was given an interview for my asylum case. I was unable to concentrate because my child was separated from me. I could only think about him and was constantly distracted. I did not even know if he was alive or dead.
- 15. Three days after having my interview I was transferred by bus to the South Texas Detention Center. There, I was able to at least watch some TV and see what was happening. I saw that the president was being forced to reunite the children with their mothers. We all were watching the protests. We all saw the people in the streets. I even saw on the news that there were some men who came to the detention center and demanded our release. All of the mothers I was with were cheering and clapping. This news gave me hope, and I began to have faith that I might see my son again. I felt, watching the protests, that I was not alone.
- 16. During my time in the South Texas Detention Center, my son had an appendectomy in Florida. He was not allowed to make phone calls to me. They told him he had to have an appointment to call me. Three days after the operation he remembered the number for my nephew in Houston. My nephew called me in Pearsall to tell me what had happened. No one tried to contact me and tell me what had happened to my son, other than my son himself.
- 17. I did not know my son was having surgery, who performed his surgery, who was caring for him, how long it lasted, or how it went. No one asked for my permission or input about the well-being of my child. All I knew was that my child was very sick, he was in a completely different state from me, and strangers were surrounding him.
- 18. Sometime after, ICE called me and said I was going to be deported. I told them "My son has been operated on and I am not going anywhere without him." I told them I was not

going to leave without my son, even if they killed me. An immigration official told me to sign my deportation paper. When I asked to read it, he said "No, you will sign it regardless", and he covered up the text with his hand so that I could not read it. He told me I had to sign on the line no matter what it said. I refused to sign it, because I had to be with my son again.

- 19. I could not eat during these long weeks. I prayed that God surround me, because I needed him to be there watching over me. I will never forget what the president did to me. I am forever changed. I thank God that I am back with my child, because I will never let anyone take him from me again.
- 20. For the 62 days that we were separated I was only able to talk to my son twice, for about ten minutes. Now we are detained again inside of the South Texas Family Residential Center. He is trying to be strong. I hope he will heal quickly. But things are different with him now. He wakes up at night thinking he sees shadows outside. He worries it is ICE coming again to take him away from me. I cannot permit that to happen to him again. He is everything to me, and I will fight for him and for our case.



I, wear under the penalties of perjury that the attached declaration is true and correct to the best of my abilities. This declaration was read back to me word for word in Spanish, a language in which I am fluent.

Signature

<u>6 De a goste</u> Date

I, <u>LEANNE</u> Pwdw, certify that I am proficient in both Spanish and English. I read the declaration above in its entirety to ______

in Spanish.

Signature

8/6/2018