

## Cerabino: Gov. Rick Scott crosses rhetorical border on caged children

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Every once in a while, it's worth translating Gov. Rick Scott into English.

Scott has a tendency to string words together in ways that defy meaning, mask intent or signify nothing.

For example, here is Scott's take on President Donald Trump's recent zero-tolerance policy that is separating children from their undocumented parents at the Mexican border. These isolated children are being held in kennel-like detention centers, like the one in Homestead, Florida.

Scott was asked this week to respond to the forcible removal of children from their parents.

Here is Scott's written response.

*“What the country is witnessing right now is the byproduct of the many years of bi-partisan inaction and failure from our federal government,” Scott wrote. “They have failed to secure our borders, which has resulted in this chaos.*

*“Let me be clear — I do not favor separating families. Washington is to blame for this by being all talk and no action, and the solution is to secure the border,” Scott continued.*

*“Anyone seeking to enter our country illegally needs to be sent back, with the exception of those who are truly seeking asylum from an oppressive regime.”*

Let's break this down, sentence by sentence.

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**Sentence No. 1:** *“What the country is witnessing right now is the byproduct of the many years of bi-partisan inaction and failure from our federal government.”*

The border crisis with the children has nothing to do with “many years” of immigration policy and everything to do with a policy announced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions on April 6.

There was no need to turn abandoned Walmarts into chain-linked kid kennels before then. Since April, about 2,000 children, some not even a year old, have been forcibly removed from their parents without clear plans of reuniting them.

The head of the American Association of Pediatrics has called this Trump administration policy “government-sanctioned child abuse.”

That’s what this country is witnessing right now.

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**Sentence No. 2:** *“They have failed to secure our borders, which has resulted in this chaos.”*

Federal lawmakers, the “they” in this sentence, have spent a fortune in taxpayer dollars on border security over many years. While non-military federal employees have fallen, the number of border guards has grown eight-fold since 1982, the libertarian Cato Institute reported.

All while illegal border crossings are declining.

“The decline in unlawful immigrant entries means many border patrol agents are twiddling their thumbs,” a Cato report titled “The Myth of Border Insecurity” said. “As recently as 2007, each border patrol agent apprehended an average of 59 unlawful immigrants. By 2015, that number had fallen to a mere 17.

“The decline in unlawful immigrants entries and the increase in border patrol has left many of them with little to do,” the report said. “Their numbers should be cut or, at an absolute minimum, not expanded any further.”

And what Scott calls “this chaos” hardly describes the state of illegal border crossings, which reached a 46-year low last December, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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**Sentence No. 3:** *“Let me be clear — I do not favor separating families.”*

This is the part of Rick Scott’s statement where he hedges his bets in an election year by pretending to advocate a position that is the opposite of his real position.

He did the same thing while explaining his position on gay marriage four years ago while running for re-election.

“I don’t believe in discrimination,” Scott said at the time. “I believe in traditional marriage.”

See? He said he was against discrimination, then in the next sentence he stated his support for a discriminatory policy.

That’s what he’s doing again with these kids. He says he’s against separating families, then fails to condemn the policy that is separating families.

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**Sentence No. 4:** *“Washington is to blame for this by being all talk and no action, and the solution is to secure the border.”*

Translation: So now that I've pretended for a brief moment to be against the Trump policy, let me go back to the previous, irrelevant nonsense to make it clear that I will be remaining on the sidelines for this moral issue.

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**Sentence No. 5:** *“Anyone seeking to enter our country illegally needs to be sent back, with the exception of those who are truly seeking asylum from an oppressive regime.”*

And for good measure, he's throwing another dollop of misinformation onto the steaming pile he has already created. The new policy treats all border-crossers as criminals, even the ones that Scott says are “truly seeking asylum from an oppressive regime.”

So this is an “exception” that applies to none of the caged children.

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So to recap, Gov. Rick “Let me be clear” Scott is against forcibly removing migrant kids from their parents, but not against the policy that calls for that to be done.

If this doesn't make sense to you, well, you're probably not going to like his U.S. Senate campaign pitch:

“We gotta stop sending talkers to Washington,” Scott said. “Let's send some doers to Washington.”