November 3, 2015

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais Wilson
52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland

Re: Input to Human Rights Council resolution 29/22 on the protection of the Family

Dear Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein,

We founded The RIDGE Project over 15 years ago after experiencing first-hand the devastating effects caused by the breakdown of the family unit. Ron had been wrongfully incarcerated and our family had been ripped apart. But, we were determined to keep our family intact, healthy, and thriving. Not only did we succeed in that effort, but we have since helped tens of thousands of families do the same.

The family is the most basic, necessary building block of our society in America, and, indeed, around the world. When a family is healthy, children grow up in an environment that fosters growth and inclusion. Statistics show that children with involved fathers perform better in school, are less likely to do drugs, have lower incidence of poverty, are less likely to be involved in criminal acitivity, have decreased incidences of mental and emotional disorders, and have a lower risk for suicide. It is our undeniable duty to protect the insititution of the family unit for our own well-being and that of future generations.

Consequently, when families suffer and are broken, the whole of society is affected. Research has proven that destructive cycles are almost always passed down from one generation to the next when there is no outside intervention. Generational cycles of poverty, entitlement, and incarceration create a culture where mediocrity flourishes, welfare dependency is rampant, prisons are overcrowded, fatherlessness begets further family disintegration, and children grow up in an environment that perpetuates their plight.

Strong families produce strong children who will pass on that legacy of strength and commitment for gener­ations to come. At the heart of this process is a stable family. We fully and whole-heartedly believe that the protection of the traditional family unit is something that we must unanimously fight for as individuals, communities, and nations, to preserve the basic foundations of our society.

Sincerely,

Ron & Catherine Tijerina

Co-Executive Directors