



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 3, 2018

Mr. Alex Azar, Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C St. SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Secretary Azar:

We write to you today seeking information on how the administration's actions of separating children from their families impact Pennsylvania. Our main priority as statewide officials is ensuring the safety and well-being of all Pennsylvanians, including those residing in our great Commonwealth even for a short period of time. We are very concerned about vulnerable children, for whom the trauma of being separated from their families will have a short and long-term adverse impact on their mental health and well-being. Accordingly, we reiterate our strong opposition to the practice of detaining families who seek asylum in the United States, especially the practice of separating children from their parents.

Like other states, Pennsylvania has a statutory responsibility for the oversight of Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) takes great pride in its commitment to serving children through a strong licensing program, which is the foundation for ensuring the health, safety, and general well-being of the children who reside in these facilities. In addition, DHS' Unaccompanied Refugee Minors' Program (URMP), which is administered through contracts at the local level, provides services for youth, including custodial foster care and group home placement, case management services, supervised semi-independent living, and medical and cash assistance.

Knowing that thousands of children have been separated from their parents by the Administration in just the last few months, we would like to ensure that any unaccompanied minor residing in Pennsylvania is receiving the care required under state law. To that end, we write to reiterate several questions posed by Pennsylvania's DHS to the Acting Regional Administrator for the Administration for Children and Families on June 26, 2018. Specifically, we seek detailed responses to the following questions:

- How many unaccompanied immigrant minors are currently residing in Pennsylvania?
- Where are these children currently residing?
- In addition, please provide a list of all Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) contracted facilities with UACs in Pennsylvania, as well as a description of the vetting and oversight conducted by your department over these facilities.

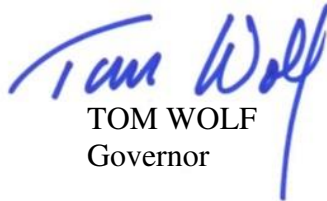


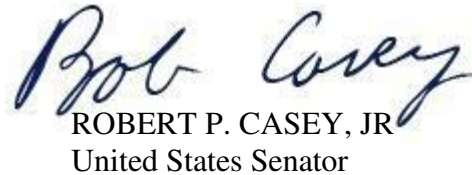
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- Does the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have plans, both short and long-term, for reuniting these unaccompanied children with their families? If so, what is the specific timeline for reunification?
- Does HHS know precisely where the parents or guardians of unaccompanied children are currently located?
- Are there details available for Pennsylvania officials with regard to how the safety and well-being of these children will be protected in the interim?

We remain very concerned that the federal government's recent actions of separating children from their parents will cause irreparable harm in the lives of a very vulnerable population. We ask that you provide information about the scope of this issue in Pennsylvania so that we can carry out our responsibilities as elected officials. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


TOM WOLF
Governor


ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
United States Senator