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One Hundred Thirteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2014

Hon. W. Craig Fugate
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Administration
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Fugate:

On June 2, 2014, Secretary Johnson announced that you are the Federal Coordinating Official of the Unified Coordination Group designated by the President to address the tremendous increase in Unaccompanied Alien Children (UACs) entering the U.S. across our southern border, particularly in the Rio Grande Valley area. As Members of the Committee on Homeland Security, we are concerned about the border security-related issues raised by this situation and want to ensure the Department of Homeland Security (DHS or the Department) responds appropriately to the health and welfare needs of unaccompanied children in DHS custody.

As you know, it is estimated that this year DHS will apprehend over 60,000 unaccompanied children. It is our understanding that as of June 3, 2014, the Department had 3,346 unaccompanied children in custody, the majority of whom had been in DHS custody for more than the 72 hours permitted by law. We also understand that DHS has sent additional personnel and resources to the Rio Grande Valley to respond to this situation and is transporting some of the apprehended individuals to other areas along the southern border for processing. Finally, it is our understanding that additional bed space is being secured at multiple Department of Defense facilities to house unaccompanied children.

We are greatly concerned about DHS's capacity to temporarily house, process, and transfer unaccompanied children and others apprehended in the Rio Grande Valley as a result of the recent influx of unaccompanied children. The fact that the Office of Management and Budget recently requested an additional $2.28 billion for addressing unaccompanied children next year, with $166 million necessary for DHS border and immigration operations in particular, underscores the compelling need for more resources.

As Members of the Committee on Homeland Security, we are committed to supporting appropriate DHS efforts to address this troubling humanitarian situation while ensuring DHS can fulfill its other border-related missions. In order to provide a better understanding of this situation, the response by DHS and Federal government as a whole, and possible future needs, please respond to the following questions in writing no later than June 24, 2014.

- How many unaccompanied children have been apprehended by DHS this fiscal year in each Border Patrol Sector? Please also specify the nationality of the children apprehended in each Sector.
- For the last year and the current year to date, how many of the apprehended children have been placed with family members or other guardians in the U.S.? How many have been repatriated?
- How many unaccompanied children are currently in DHS custody? How many are currently in the custody of other Federal agencies?
- On average, how long are unaccompanied children in Border Patrol custody before being transferred? To the extent that they are in custody beyond the permitted 72 hours, please describe the reasons for delay.
- What specific steps is the Federal government undertaking to ensure the health and welfare of unaccompanied children while in its custody?
- Please provide an account of the DHS personnel and assets involved in addressing the increased apprehensions in the Rio Grande Valley, specifying what personnel and assets have been deployed to Rio Grande Valley Sector from other areas of the border.
- How many unaccompanied children and other individuals apprehended in the Rio Grande Valley have been transported to other locations for processing by DHS? Please specify the number by locations. What DHS assets and personnel are engaged in this effort?
- What is DHS doing to combat human smuggling operations, which are frequently responsible for bringing the children to the U.S.? Are additional resources necessary for this purpose? Please explain.
- Is Federal funding sufficient for the current fiscal year to cover DHS operations in response to this situation, or will additional funding be necessary? Please explain.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Hope Goins, Chief Counsel for Oversight, at (202) 226-2616. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member

Sheila Jackson Lee
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security

Loretta Sanchez

Cedric L. Richmond

Ron Barber

Beto O'Rourke

Filemon Vela