



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0529

June 26, 2018

Alex M. Azar, II
Secretary
U.S. Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We write to express extraordinary concern surrounding the substantial increase in the number of children placed into the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) under the Department of Health and Human Services. Thousands of children, including infants, have been taken away from their parents at the southern border as a result of the Trump administration's cruel and unnecessary policy.

According to an official at your department, the Trump administration has detained 2,322 children under the age of 12 because of the administration's horrific family separation policy, and a total of 11,786 children 18 years old and under are currently held at ORR.¹ We are extremely concerned that ORR shelters are not prepared to care for the needs of these young children. Also alarming are several reports that ORR-run facilities such as the Shiloh Treatment Center in Texas are unnecessarily and unlawfully administering unknown drugs to children without the consent of guardians or parents.² Please respond to the following questions:

- 1) Regarding the number and ages of the children in your custody:

¹ Shefali Luthra and Marisa Taylor, *A fifth of immigrant children detained under 'zero tolerance' policy are younger than 13*, 20 June, 2018 < <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/a-fifth-of-immigrant-children-detained-under-zero-tolerance-policy-are-younger-than-13> > [20 June, 2018]

² Reuters Staff, *U.S. centers force migrant children to take drugs: lawsuit*, 20 June, 2018 < <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-medication/u-s-centers-force-migrant-children-to-take-drugs-lawsuit-idUSKBN1JH076> > [21 June, 2018]

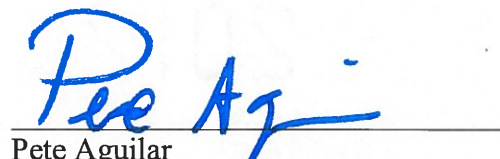
- a. How many children has ORR taken into custody as a result of the “zero tolerance policy” starting on May 7 through June 21?
 - b. How many children per day are received by ORR facilities?
 - c. Please provide a breakdown of ages of the children.
 - i. How many children are under the age of 1 year old?
 - ii. Between the ages of 1 and 3?
 - iii. Between the ages of 3 and 5?
 - iv. Between the ages of 5 and 7?
 - v. Between the ages of 7 and 12?
- 2) Does ORR have adequate supplies, equipment, trainings, and employees to care for the physical needs of all the young children in its custody?
- a. How many changing pads/tables, baby tubs, and baby monitors does ORR have at each facility that houses infants? Does each infant have enough diapers, wipes, baby powder, baby toiletries? Does ORR have an adequate supply of baby food and formula?
 - b. How many employees at ORR facilities care for the children? What is the ratio of employees/contractors to the number of children they must care for? How many ORR staff members speak indigenous languages? Do all new ORR staff and contractors receive prompt training on working with English and non-English-speaking children? What kind of childcare training are employees given? Are ORR employees able and instructed to provide frequent feedings and diaper changes for infants?
 - c. If the children are transported, are they transported using appropriate travel gear for infants and toddlers (for example: car seats)?
- 3) Are the children’s day-to-day needs being met?
- a. Does each infant receive baby food and formula at feeding intervals approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics?
 - b. Are the children receiving proper nutrition? How many fruits, vegetables, vitamins and how much protein does each child receive per day? How many meals, snacks, and drinks a day does each child receive?
 - c. Does ORR have extra articles of clothing available for each child after baths or do they remain in the same clothes they wore when they arrived at the facility?
 - d. Is each child bathed every day?
 - e. Do the children have educational materials or toys available to them? If so, please specify what types.
- 4) What sleeping arrangements does ORR have for the children?
- a. Does ORR have enough cribs? Is there one infant per crib? Do the children sleep on mats or is there a bed available for each child? Are there sheets, blankets, and pillows for each child?
 - b. Do most children share bedrooms? If so, how many children are there per room?
 - c. Do they share beds or are there separate beds for each child?
 - d. Are children placed in rooms according to gender?
 - e. Are children allowed naps? If so, what ages are allowed naps?
 - f. At “tent cities” like the one at the Tornillo Port of Entry, where temperatures can be as high as 106 degrees Fahrenheit, how warm do these tents get?
- 5) Regarding medical care:

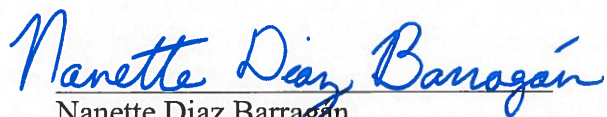
- a. Are these children being seen by pediatricians to monitor their physical and mental health status? If so, how often are they taken to receive care?
 - b. What types of efforts have been made to contact the legal guardian, parent, or family of children to obtain consent and medical histories for each child prior to administering drugs?
 - c. Are children with preexisting conditions or chronic diseases being administered proper medications and treatment?
 - d. Are children being forcibly given psychotropic drugs, or any type of medications, to manage trauma or stress due to family separation, as reported by recent media reports?
 - e. If so, what drugs or medications are they being administered, and why is this necessary?
 - f. How many children have you administered these drugs to, and what are the dosage rates for each child?
 - g. What are the side effects of these drugs, and have any children experienced negative reactions to them? If so, how have these cases been remedied?
- 6) What is ORR's policy regarding siblings? Are siblings kept together in the same facilities or separated?
 - 7) What are ORR's policies regarding "no touch?" Are employees able to provide physical comfort to young children who are crying and in distress?
 - 8) When an ORR subcontractor violates state and local codes related to the well-being and standards of care for children, does ORR receive a copy of these violations? Please provide copies of these state-code violations or a summary document of how ORR is working with its subcontractors to address these state and local infractions.
 - 9) What efforts is ORR taking to reunite children with their parents? What is ORR's current timeline for the reunification process? How is this timeline being communicated to the children and their families?
 - 10) Are any of the children in foster care? If so, how many? What efforts is ORR taking to guarantee the wellbeing of the children in foster care?

ORR is responsible for the safety and care of all migrant children. We need evidence demonstrating that ORR has the resources, equipment, and capabilities to safely and properly care for these young children. Please respond to this letter with answers to these questions within 20 days of receipt.

Sincerely,


Tony Cárdenas
MEMBER OF CONGRESS


Pete Aguilar
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Nanette Diaz Barragan
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Karen Bass
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Earl Blumenauer
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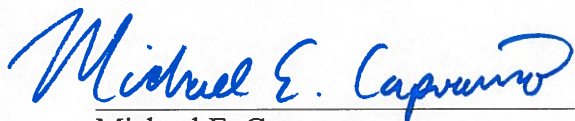
Suzanne Bonamici
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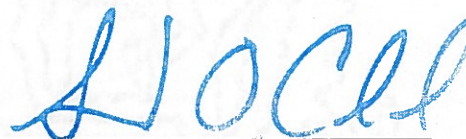
Brendan F. Boyle
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Anthony G. Brown
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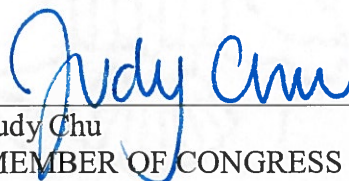
Michael E. Capuano
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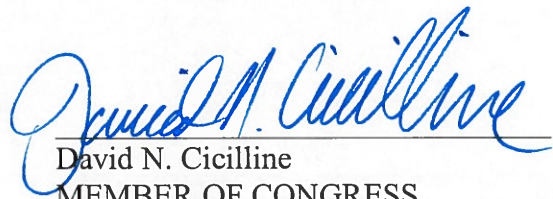
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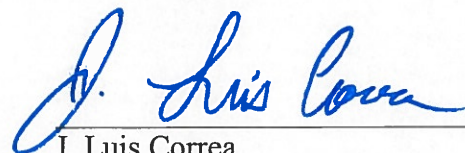
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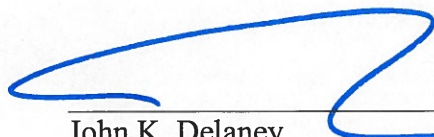
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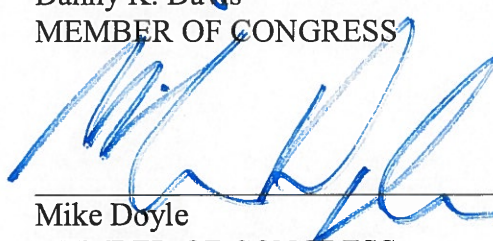
J. Luis Correa
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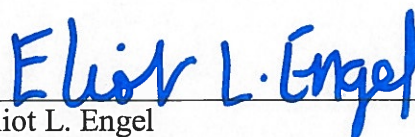
Danny K. Davis
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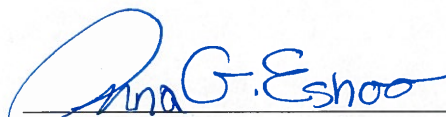
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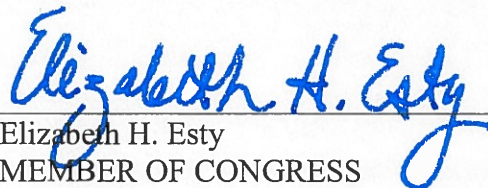
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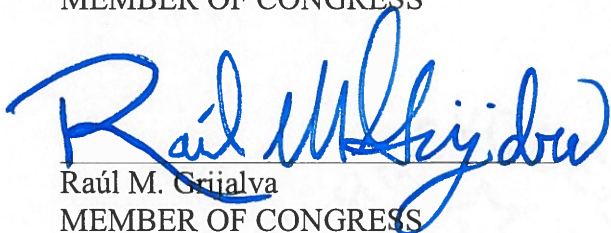
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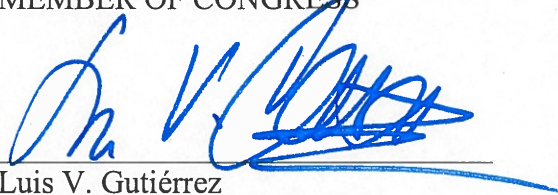
Bill Foster
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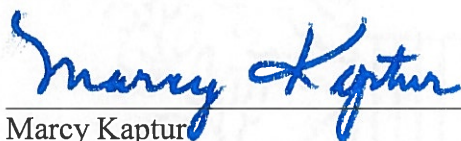
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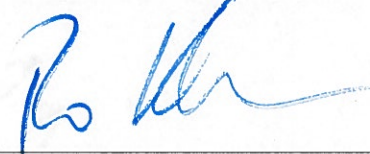
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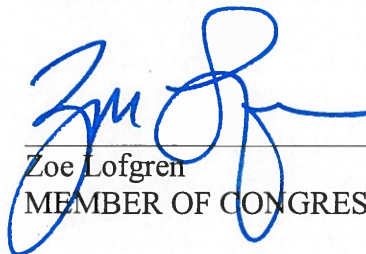
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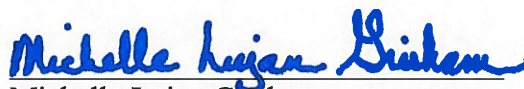
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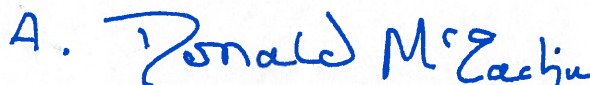
Ben Ray Lujan
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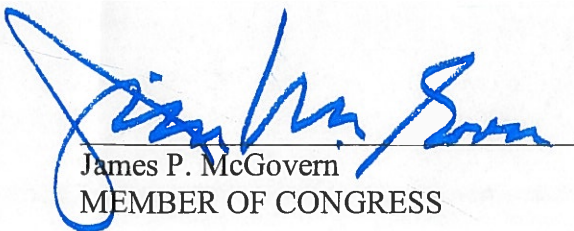
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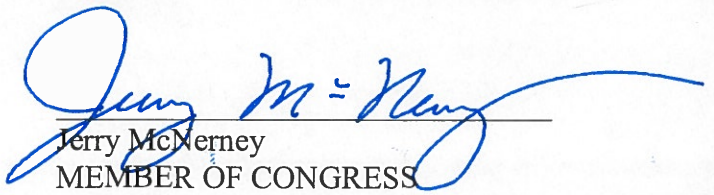


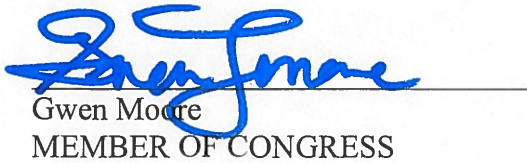
Doris Matsui
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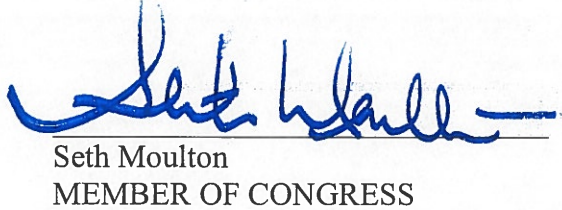


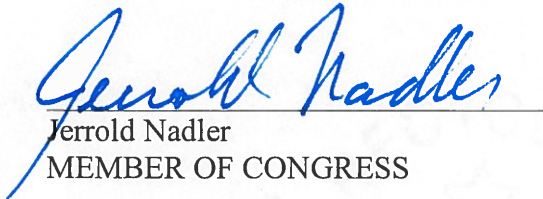
A. Donald McEachin
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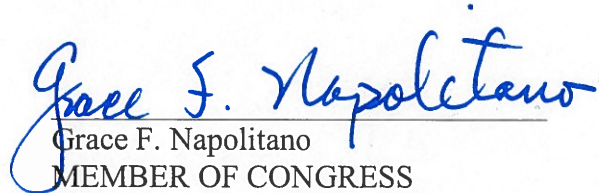

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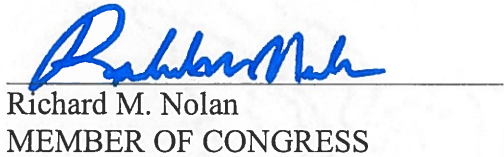

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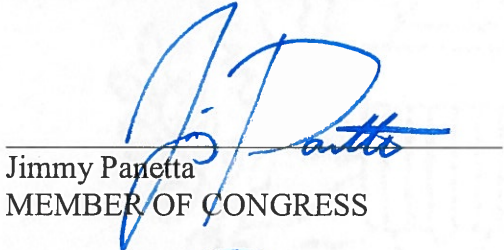

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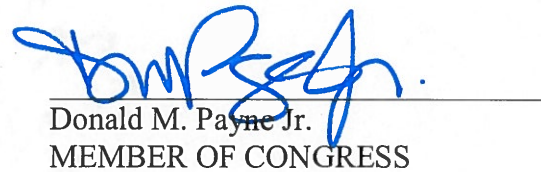

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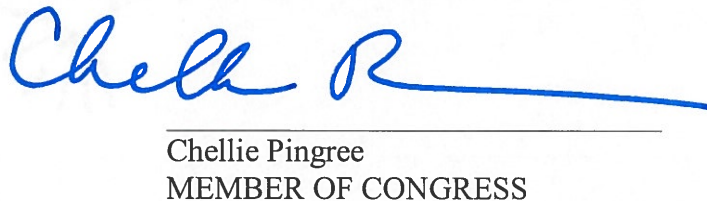

Richard M. Nolan
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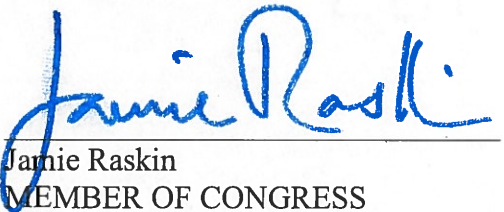

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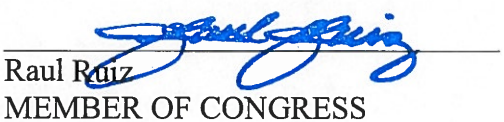

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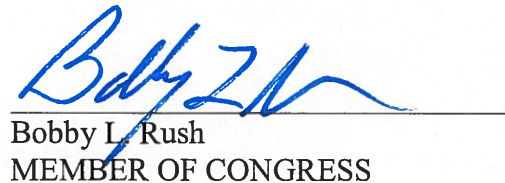

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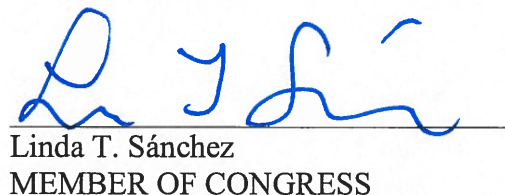

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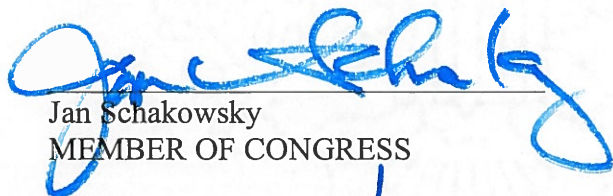

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Raul Ruiz
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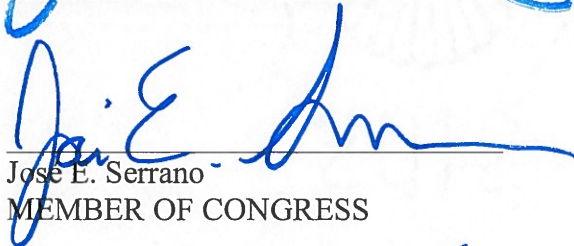

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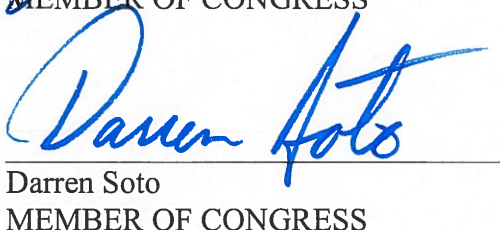
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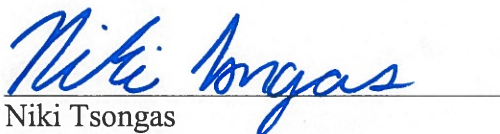
Albio Sires
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Darren Soto
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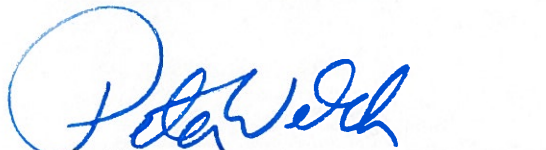
Mark Takano
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Niki Tsongas
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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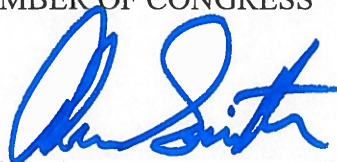
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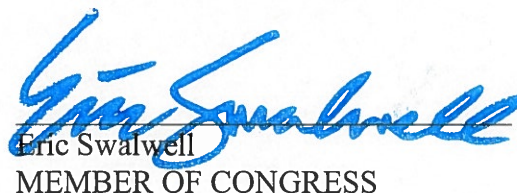
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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Brad Sherman
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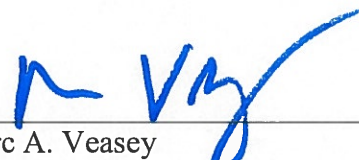
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