

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 20, 2018

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Azar and Secretary Nielsen:

The Administration's policy of separating children from their parents at the border is deeply concerning and it goes against our nation's values and long history as a land of immigrants. As we learn more about the devastating effects of President Trump's zero tolerance policy, we are seeing more and more images of some of the children that are being detained. Based on these images, many have raised concerns about the status of young girls who have been separated at the border. The American people have a right to know what is being done to ensure that these young girls are safe and being properly cared for.

On June 18, 2018, Secretary Nielsen was unable to speak to the whereabouts and living conditions for the many girls, toddlers, and infants who have been separated from their families at the border. According to data released by the Department of Homeland Security, almost 2,000 children have been separated from their parents and placed under supervision of HHS in accordance with the Trump Administration's current immigration policy.

Disturbingly, the photos and videos released as of the date of this letter only show boys, and only boys age 10 and up. We are asking for a formal answer to these and other questions regarding the status of children being detained by DHS and HHS.

- How many total girls are under the supervision of DHS and HHS? How many facilities are there? What is the budget for each facility?
- How has HHS ensured that the facilities housing girls are safe, clean, and age appropriate? When will HHS allow access or provide visual evidence of the status of these girls and the facility conditions?
- What precautions are being taken to keep young girls protected from exploitation?
- Who is taking care of infant and toddlers who have been separated from their mothers and can no longer be breastfed?

- How are DHS and HHS ensuring that the companies and nonprofits that operate facilities through government contracts and grants are conducting thorough background checks on potential illegal behavior among their employees who work with young girls and boys?
- How are DHS and HHS ensuring that the specific needs of young girls are being met?
- How many pregnant young women are in ORR's custody? What is ORR doing to ensure they are receiving adequate prenatal and medical care?
- How many young women in ORR's custody have recently given birth? What is ORR doing to ensure they are receiving adequate medical care?
- Please provide more information on the reported practice of forcibly injecting children with powerful psychiatric drugs, including what children are being injected with, the rationale for this practice, the number of children subjected to this.
- What plans does DHS and HHS have to reunify children who have been separated from their parents at the border?

The Administration has claimed that limiting media access to the detention centers is out of privacy protection for the detained children. We recognize the importance of protecting the privacy of these children. However, this crisis has raised great concern among Members of Congress and the American people. We look forward to your timely response to our questions.

Sincerely,

DEBBIE DINGELL
Member of Congress

ANN MCLANE KUSTER
Member of Congress

TERRI SEWELL
Member of Congress

GRACE NAPOLITANO
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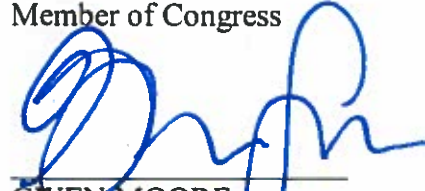

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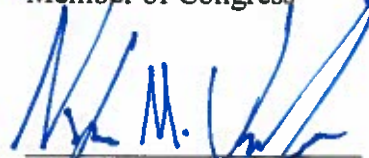

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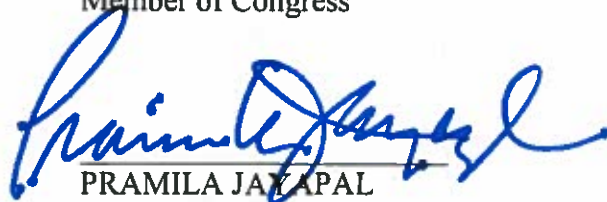
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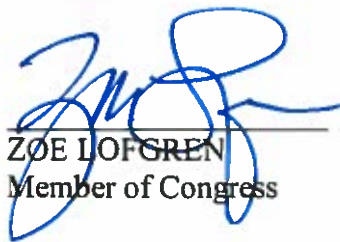
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