



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

June 19, 2018

Secretary Alex M. Azar, II
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

As a result of decades of failed immigration policies from Washington, including the failure to secure our borders which has led to an influx of illegal immigrants to our country, the federal government has been sheltering unaccompanied immigrant children in 100 shelters across seventeen different states for years. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, one such shelter is located in Homestead, Florida. These facilities are 100 percent controlled and operated by the federal government. In 2008, Congress passed a bill that authorized this practice. This legislation was voted favorably by Florida's entire delegation, including Senators Mel Martinez and Bill Nelson. In 2014, President Obama utilized the facility in Homestead to house unaccompanied minors. I requested information from the Obama administration on the influx of children moved to Florida at the time. I received little response.

In February of this year, the federal government notified Congress, including Florida's Congressional delegation, and state and local officials that they were planning to re-open the shelter in Homestead. Recently, we received unconfirmed reports that this facility is now potentially holding children who have been forcibly removed from their families as a result of President Donald Trump's zero-tolerance policy toward illegal entry into the United States.

I have been very clear that I absolutely do not agree with the practice of separating children from their families. This practice needs to stop now.

I am requesting that you immediately provide the below information regarding these recent reports. This information is urgently needed to protect children who may have come into our country through the long-flawed federal system.

Secretary Alex M. Azar, II

June 19, 2018

Page Two

- Will you notify federal, state and local authorities immediately of any current or future unaccompanied minors - or children who were separated from their families under President Trump's zero-tolerance policy toward illegal entry into the United States - coming to, or placed in, Florida?
- Are you conducting health screenings both at the border and again at the time the children are placed in shelters?
- What health, educational, or other social services have been provided to any children placed in Florida?

Reunifying the children who have been separated from their families is very important and the State of Florida stands ready to assist in this process. Please inform me on any measures the state can facilitate to help the reunification process. It is extremely frustrating that, after decades of inaction by the federal government, many innocent children are now paying the price for the failures of Washington. Congress must address our immigration system immediately.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
Governor