June 2, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

When we first wrote to you on March 4, 2021 about the crisis on the southwest border, there were about 7,000 unaccompanied children in U.S. custody. When we last wrote to you on March 25, 2021, there were 13,000. Recently, there were over 22,000. Hundreds more children are arriving by the day while the costs to taxpayers for providing adequate care are skyrocketing. Once again, we request that you hold a full Committee hearing with Biden Administration officials in order for them to account for the effects of their policies in fueling the border crisis and scrutinize what plans, if any, they have to remedy this dire situation that places vulnerable children into the hands of human smugglers.

Although the Administration reports lower numbers of children in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody, those children have simply been transferred into emergency shelters opened by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). U.S. Representative Henry Cuellar, a Democrat from a border district, has correctly highlighted that the Administration is simply moving children “from one tent to the other tent.”

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4 Id.
6 Id.
In recent months, HHS has opened more than a dozen emergency intake shelters to house these children on sites ranging from army bases to convention centers. Conditions in these emergency intake facilities are concerning. HHS was recently forced to shut down one warehouse-like facility in April for failing to meet agency standards. Conditions were so bad at that particular facility that children were forced to use plastic bags to toilet due to a staffing shortage. In addition to activating the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), federal employees from across the government have been called to leave their positions to come to the border and assist HHS in caring for unaccompanied children.

Meanwhile, costs are skyrocketing. The Biden Administration has already awarded $3 billion to contractors to house the unaccompanied children, the majority of which were comprised of no-bid contracts awarded to just three entities. Documents obtained by the New York Times indicate that the Administration estimates that it will need another $4 billion before the end of the fiscal year to cover the costs of caring for unaccompanied children in custody. This is in addition to money already transferred within HHS for that purpose. Politico reports that HHS is reprogramming funds intended for the Strategic National Stockpile and coronavirus testing, indicating that the Biden border policies are having a detrimental effect on the government’s ability to respond to the current pandemic or future pandemics. This is not a problem that will simply solve itself. Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas recently confirmed that hundreds of children are still arriving per day. The Committee must take action to fulfill our oversight responsibility.

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10 Id.


14 Overcrowded Border Jails Give Way to Packed Migrant Child Shelters, supra note 5.


16 DHS chief Mayorkas says hundreds of migrant kids still coming in daily, supra note 3.
As we noted in our previous letter, this Committee held multiple hearings during the Trump Administration on the treatment of children at the border. It is surprising that you have failed to schedule a hearing during the current border crisis created by the Biden Administration, especially as conditions continue to deteriorate and more and more taxpayer funds are required. Even as you remain silent, members of your own party in both the Senate and the House have decried the Biden Administration’s response to the border crisis.

Yet again, we urge you to schedule a hearing to conduct oversight of the crisis at the southwest border and the Biden Administration’s plans to get control of the situation and stem the surge. Our Committee should not stand on the sidelines simply because a Democrat occupies the White House. The Committee must hold the Biden Administration accountable for the effects of its policies and their role in exacerbating the border crisis.

Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,

James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

Jody Hice
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations

Glenn S. Grothman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security

Michael Cloud
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

Ralph Norman
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment

Pete Sessions
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties


18  Border Democrats slamming Biden for ‘failed’ response to border crisis, supra note 7.
Jim Jordan
Member of Congress

Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress

Clay Higgins
Member of Congress

Andy Biggs
Member of Congress

Nancy Mace
Member of Congress

Jake LaTurner
Member of Congress

Yvette Herrell
Member of Congress

Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress

Fred Keller
Member of Congress

Andrew S. Clyde
Member of Congress

Scott Franklin
Member of Congress

Pat Fallon
Member of Congress

Byron Donalds
Member of Congress
cc: The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

The Honorable Ro Khanna
Subcommittee on Environment

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Chairman
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties