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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION
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RAILROADS, PIPELINES,
AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

WATER RESOURCES
AND ENVIRONMENT

July 11, 2014

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

As Vice Chair of the Committee on Homeland Security and Chairman of its Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, I write today about recent news reports in my home state of Michigan that are deeply troubling. According to these reports, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through its grantees, is currently seeking space in several cities in Michigan to house undocumented alien children (UAC) who have entered illegally across our southern border from Central America through Mexico. These reports also indicate these migrants will receive various social services, including vaccinations, medical care, trauma counseling, life skills development, etiquette training, and English lessons.

To date, I am not aware of any communication, formal or otherwise, relayed to these communities and/or their elected representatives, local health officials and law enforcement agencies regarding your agency's intention to house the UAC in facilities within their communities.

Due to the lack of information flowing from your agency, I ask that you provide clarification to the following questions before any further steps are taken to relocate these individuals:

1. What is the process in which HHS determines where to relocate these UAC? Which other agencies, state and local government entities, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders are involved in this decision?
2. Where in Michigan is HHS, any contractor, or any subcontractor of HHS, seeking space to relocate these UAC?
3. How many UAC are HHS currently seeking to temporarily relocate in Michigan? What is your long-term plan for these individuals? Will this relocation to Michigan serve as a short-term housing option or will this be a permanent housing option?
4. Who, within the State or each respective community, have you notified about your intention to relocate these UAC, and when?

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5. Which law enforcement agencies, within the State or each respective community, have you notified about your intention to relocate these UAC?
6. Which State or local health agencies have you notified about your intention to relocate these UAC?
7. What access, if any, will these UAC have to the community and its services?
8. What protective services, if any, have been arranged for by HHS for the facilities that will house the UAC?
9. Can you confirm that the State and local communities will not bear any costs for these UAC?

I respectfully ask that you respond to these questions before you continue any efforts to relocate these undocumented foreign nationals away from the southern border and into Michigan. More importantly, if you are unable to answer these questions at this time, I would request a briefing on how you plan to proceed with these contracts in the future and what notification protocols you will implement for federal, state and local officials.

Sincerely,



Candice S. Miller

Chairman

Subcommittee on Borders and Maritime Security

Committee on Homeland Security