

August 14, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies

Dear Chair and Ranking Member:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to urge you to protect the existing funding of \$948,000,000 for the authorized Unaccompanied Alien Child (UAC) Program in your FY 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Many of the children served by our organizations are fleeing violence in their home country and are victims of persecution, severe forms of abuse, abandonment, neglect, or human trafficking. A 2014 report by UNHCR found that a significant majority of these children are at risk of violence in their home countries and that their plight should trigger an international protection response. Numerous other reports have found that increasing violence in Central America is the driving force behind this unprecedented migration.

We understand the fiscal challenges the nation faces; however, during this time, we cannot lose sight of the refugee crisis involving unaccompanied children. We describe below the critical need for funding for the Department of Health and Human Services to provide order to the situation and protection to the children in need.

Unaccompanied Alien Child (UAC) Program – In general

The UAC program, authorized under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, P.L. 107-296, the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (TVPRA), P.L. 110-457, and the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA), P.L. 113-4, provides shelter and support services to unaccompanied alien children apprehended in the United States by the Department of Homeland Security or other law enforcement agencies. The program also provides medical care, legal services, and other support services to these children while they are in ORR custody. In addition, ORR provides limited post-release services to certain children while their immigration cases are pending. We strongly support existing funding for this program and request that this funding continue to be allocated through a competitive grant process.

We look forward to working with you to protect existing funding that provides critical services for unaccompanied children. Protecting existing funding to provide legal services for unaccompanied children will enable the United States to remain a global leader in the protection of the most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality
Advocating Opportunity
African American Ministers In Action (AAMIA)
African Services Committee
Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Americans for Immigrant Justice
American Immigration Lawyers Association
Apostle Immigrant Services - New Haven, CT
Ascentria Care Alliance
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta
Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach
Asylee Women Enterprise
Amnesty International USA
Atlas: DIY
Ayuda
Berkshire Immigrant Center
Bet Tzedek
Bethany Christian Services
Bread for the World
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition
Casa de Esperanza
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington
Catholic Charities of Baltimore, Esperanza Center
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami, Inc.
Center for Hope and Safety
Center on Immigration and Child Welfare
Central American Resource Center – CARECEN – of California
Centro Legal de la Raza
Church World Service
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Connecticut Voices for Children
Disciples Refugee and Immigration Ministries
Dolores Street Community Services
East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
End Domestic Abuse WI

Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Franciscan Action Network
Freedom Network USA
Futures Without Violence
HIAS
HIAS Pennsylvania
Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
Human Rights First
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigration Center for Women and Children
Immigration Counseling Service (ICS)
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Rescue Committee
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA)
Jobs with Justice
Juvenile Law Center
Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (KCIRR)
Kids in Need of Defense
Latino Memphis, Derechos Immigration Program
La Raza Centro Legal
La Raza Community Resource Center
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
Law Office of Usman B. Ahmad, PC
Lawyers For Children
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Legal Services for Children
Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
MomsRising/MamásConPoder
Mosaic Family Services
My Sisters' Place
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association of Social Workers - New Mexico
National Center for Youth Law

National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
Pangea Legal Services
PODER (People Organizing to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights)
Public Counsel
Ready At Five
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES)
Refugee Services of Texas (RST)
Refugio del Rio Grande
Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
Safe Horizon
SAFY of Nevada
SchoolHouse Connection
Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)
Sin Fronteras
Social Justice Collaborative (SJC)
Tapestri, Inc.
Teaching Excellence Center
The IMPAC Fund
The Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA)
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
UNICEF USA
Union for Reform Judaism
University of San Francisco Immigration and Deportation Defense Clinic
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)
Women's Refugee Commission
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights