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### **Atlanta Journal Constitution**

10/13/14

### **Most unaccompanied immigrant children attending deportation hearings**

By [Jeremy Redmon](#)

Most unaccompanied immigrant children and teens who have been apprehended crossing the U.S.-Mexico border are showing up for their deportation hearings, according to the federal agency that oversees the nation's [immigration](#) courts.

Between July 18 and Sept. 30, 85 percent of them showed up as required for their first appearances in court, called "master calendar hearings," according to the U.S. Executive Office for [Immigration](#) Review.

During that same time frame, the courts received 10,041 cases involving unaccompanied children. Of those, 7,131 had their first hearings and 1,035 were ordered deported in absentia for not showing up.

Meanwhile, federal [immigration](#) authorities are apprehending fewer of them on the southwest border. Last week, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson disclosed that 2,424 had been arrested there last month. That is the lowest number apprehended since January of last year.

In all, 68,551 were apprehended on the southwest border during the fiscal year that ended last month, a 77 percent increase over the year before. During the first eight months of this year, 1,623 of the children and teens have been placed in the care of sponsors in Georgia.

"Though the worst is over for now — from the spike this summer and the high in illegal migration 15 years ago — the president and I are committed to building an even more secure border, and a smart strategy to get there," Johnson told the Center for Strategic and International Studies Thursday.

"Much of illegal migration is seasonal. The spike in migration we saw this summer could return. The poverty and violence that are the 'push factors' in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador still exist. The economy in this country — a 'pull factor' — is getting better."

**TIME**

10/08/14

**Asylum in America: A High-Stakes Struggle for Border Crossing Kids**

Susan Ferriss

While other kids enjoyed summer break, a teenager with more on her mind slipped into her only dressy jacket and traveled south to Anaheim, to a nondescript building housing the local office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Lithe and athletic, the girl knew she'd be less than a mile from Disneyland, "the happiest place on Earth." But for Maria, a pseudonym, fun was a luxury she couldn't afford that day in June.

At the tender age of 15, she faced an interview to plead, essentially, for her life — to ask for [refuge from violence](#) so chilling her family thought it better to [smuggle her](#) to the United States in the spring of 2013.

"Two years ago a friend of mine died in a very cold-blooded way. She died cut to pieces. My best friend," Maria said in Spanish, beginning to recount what she told a U.S. asylum officer.

As she recalled the story again, Maria's soft voice trembled, and tears spilled down her cheeks.

She said police in El Salvador asked her to identify body parts pulled from a bag dumped in a river. She recognized a birthmark on her friend's leg. She said she also witnessed a boy shot and dragged off, after a soccer game—a boy later found hanged. And before she fled, Maria said, she'd been asking her father, a U.S. truck driver, for more and more money so she could pay murderous MS-13 gangsters \$60 a month to leave her alone.

"I was traumatized," Maria sobbed. "I still am from seeing that body split apart. That dismembered head. Those arms. ... As time went by, I didn't want to go out, or eat, or do anything. The only thing I wanted to do was to die. I told myself that the same thing could happen to me."

After the 90-minute interview, the asylum officer told Maria she might know the outcome of her request in two weeks. More than three months later, after starting 11th grade this fall at an L.A. public high school, she was still waiting for an answer.

**A test for U.S. asylum**

In coming months, the American asylum system's treatment of young people like Maria will be tested as never before — on U.S. soil and in Central America as well.

The challenge to the system's integrity and humanitarian obligations follows an 88 percent increase in "unaccompanied minors" seized at the border this year. More than 66,000 kids traveling without parents were [apprehended by the Border Patrol](#) between October 2013 and the end of August.

News footage showed minors from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala simply walking up to agents to be taken in. Now a record number are expected to apply for asylum based on gang persecution, a basis for refugee status that's becoming more common— and is a highly debated area of law.

The White House on Sept. 30 also approved a plan to allow a limited number of minors to apply for refugee status—the equivalent of asylum—from inside those three Central American countries if their parents are in U.S. with legal status, including, potentially, parents with temporary legal status.

The plan echoes in-country refugee screenings in the past inside Haiti and Vietnam. But just like Maria, who crossed the border illegally in 2013, children in home countries will face eligibility requirements for asylum refugee status that go beyond experiencing fear.

The asylum application system for minors on U.S. territory has been designed, over time, to be deliberative and compassionate, yet it is by no means a sure thing for kids like Maria.

In the court of U.S. public opinion, some have already reacted with unvarnished hostility to the flood of teens and preteens and their claims to be seeking a haven from relentless violence. “They’re going to be sucking us dry,” Cape Cod resident Mary Woodruff [said](#), as Boston’s WBUR radio taped public debate over a proposal to shelter detained kids at a National Guard base in the popular vacation region.

Yet the public writ large seems to be conflicted. Fifty-two percent of respondents in an [Associated Press-GfK](#) opinion poll in late July said children claiming to be fleeing gang violence shouldn’t be treated as refugees in need of asylum. Yet a survey by the nonpartisan [Public Religion Research Institute](#) the same month found 69 percent support for allowing minors to stay if U.S. authorities decided it was unsafe for them to be deported.

Unaccompanied minors have an indisputable right to request an immigration hearing and seek asylum, but immigration skeptics want these kids to be treated more like adults who are subjected to rapid “credible fear” tests that can lead to their “expedited deportation.” Refugee rights advocates, meanwhile, are trying to make sure these kids — who have no right to appointed counsel — have help from attorneys.

As federal officials rush to prioritize resolution of minors’ applications, members of Congress are aggressively attacking the current asylum system as well as children’s claims they actually face mortal threats. Meanwhile, pro bono lawyers are struggling to document horrors some teens have faced — while line-level asylum officers face decisions about matters children tell them could mean life or death.

### **Truth about terror not enough**

To win asylum, or refugee status, even children have to go beyond simply proving that they’re being truthful about terrifying experiences.

“While age should be taken into account in making the persecution determination,” says an asylum officers’ [training guide](#), “not all harm to a child, including physical mistreatment and detention, constitutes persecution.”

The Department of Homeland Security declined a request to speak with an active asylum officer. But Christopher Manny, a former asylum officer in Chicago and Miami, explained the constraints of the law.

“As traumatic as it is seeing your friend or family member executed by a gang for refusing recruitment or refusing an extortion demand,” Manny said, “generally speaking that would not be considered grounds for a refugee definition.”

Officers must also be convinced, Manny said, that children’s suffering had a “nexus,” or was rooted in a persecutor’s intent to harm them because of one or more of five reasons: religious or political persuasion,

race, nationality or because they belong to an identifiable “social group” that’s persecuted and unprotected.

Since minors, like adults, have no right to the appointment of counsel in deportation or asylum proceedings, they largely depend on nonprofit and pro bono attorneys who often need crash courses from colleagues because they’ve never studied asylum law.

State bar associations have put out calls for members to volunteer — beginning with initial appearances the kids make before immigration judges. Kids are also showing up for help at advocacy groups like Los Angeles’ Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project, Chicago’s National Immigrant Justice Center and Washington D.C.’s Capital Area Immigrants’ Rights Coalition, among others.

Kids in Need of Defense, a nonprofit in the nation’s capital, is scrambling to match Central American minors with counsel from a pool of 8,000 potential pro bono lawyers nationwide that the group has developed at law firms, corporations and law schools.

In September, as part of the budget process, Congress rejected a White House request for \$64 million to hire more immigration judges to clear backlogs that delay cases for years and to provide other legal support, including \$15 million in direct representation for kids.

The Justice Department, though, is pressing ahead with [\\$1.8 million in grants](#) to groups to bolster legal representation for kids under 16. The Department of Health and Human Services, which runs shelters for the minors, announced in late September that it’s providing \$9 million in grants for two years to fund nonprofit legal aid groups that provide counsel.

It’s unclear exactly how many kids will get counsel, but it can clearly make a difference. A recent [analysis](#) of a decade’s worth of immigration court records showed that 43 percent of about 100,000 juveniles in the courts had counsel. About half of those kids were ultimately allowed to stay for various reasons, asylum among them. Only one in 10 without counsel was successful, according to researchers at Syracuse University.

“An attorney is so, so central,” said [Lisa Frydman](#), managing director of the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies at the University of California Hastings College of the Law.

“How does a child begin to understand what kinds of evidence they have to put together,” Frydman said, “or begin to understand what the definition of a refugee even means?”

Comprehending the intricacies of the law is just one challenge; lawyers also face the daunting task of figuring out how to gather statements and relevant evidence from foreign countries where people are often terrified to hand over records.

Under current federal law — laws some in Congress now want changed — minors who arrive on their own must be released from Border Patrol custody and placed in shelters within 72 hours. They receive basic child-friendly legal briefings. And if they are from “non-contiguous” countries, like those in Central America, they must be given a date to appear before an immigration judge before they can be deported.

If a child decides to seek asylum, immigration judges transfer their cases for judgment to the U.S. Asylum Office system, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security.

If asylum officers don't subsequently find children eligible for asylum, their cases return to immigration courts, where they can again argue for asylum in a hearing that can be more adversarial, with a government attorney cross-examining them.

### Sorting it out

As images of minors crossing the border began to dominate news programs and talk shows, the issue quickly morphed into a political football laced with confusing accusations and misleading statistics.

Between October and the end of June, more than 1,500 asylum requests were filed by unaccompanied minors. They added up to only 4 percent of all asylum applications nationally during that time. But minors' requests did more than double in less than a year. By the end of June, about 2,180 cases — including Maria's, in Anaheim — were pending resolution nationwide, according to data provided by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

During the first nine months of the 2014 fiscal year, 65 percent of kids interviewed by asylum officers were granted refuge — a rate criticized as excessive in a widely covered [press release](#) issued in July by House of Representatives Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte, a Virginia Republican who opposes federal expenditures on counsel for unaccompanied minors. He declined to comment further.

Goodlatte's July release alleged that too many kids were being rushed to undeserving asylum status on the basis of "proven or possible fraud," citing an internal report from the Department of Homeland Security.

What the release didn't say was that the overall numbers of kids approved during that time frame was modest: just 108 minors.

About 60 other cases were sent to immigration judges for what amounts to an appeal. Thirty-eight additional cases were closed for reasons that included failure to appear. Only two of the 108 minors approved were *new* arrivals who came in during the nine-month time frame; the rest were kids who had arrived earlier.

### U.S. government reports on brutal gangs

In that recent nine-month period, some 90 percent of the kids interviewed by asylum officers were represented by counsel. On average, up to now, most minors have taken more than 300 days to file formal application forms. Because kids are kids, and are frightened, lawyers say, it can take weeks, even months, to fully understand what happened to them.

Asylum officers attempt to resolve cases within a few months of receiving an application. Kids' lawyers say the process is accelerating now that the Department of Homeland Security, the umbrella agency handling border and immigration matters, has made minors' cases a priority.

To help frame minors' stories, lawyers say they routinely submit, with applications, U.S. government reports acknowledging the pervasive, brutal control organized-crime rings now exert in Central America.

In 2012, the U.S. Treasury Department [designated](#) the notorious MS-13 gang — which Maria said preyed on her — as a "transnational crime organization" involved in global narcotics smuggling and other crimes. A U.S. State Department report also warned in 2006 that kids as young as 8 were targets for gang recruitment, extortion and retaliation in some countries.

Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala have some of the highest per capita murder rates in the world.

A [Congressional Research Service paper](#) issued in July took note of a United Nations survey of about 400 Central American minors in U.S. custody in the fall of 2013. About half said they had experienced “serious harm or threats by organized criminal groups or state actors,” references to gangs and to corrupt police.

But these claims are controversial. San Diego-area GOP Rep. Darrell Issa, chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, downplayed the role of gang violence in creating the recent surge among children.

“What you’re seeing is a flood of illegals coming here prepped to say whatever they need to say to get to stay here because the President of the United States has told them, in no uncertain terms: If they get here, he won’t enforce the law,” Issa said at a June congressional hearing. Reports of “cheat sheets” composed by smugglers hired by parents fueled the idea that kids were making stories up.

Maria said it was her idea in 2013 to flee El Salvador, not her father’s, and she implored him to help her.

“The majority of my friends that have stayed in El Salvador are terrified. Some tolerate beatings; others, threats. Others are in the gangs now. Waiting to see when it’s their day to die,” Maria said, her voice shaking.

“It’s a country where no one can even play safely, nor think. Nothing,” she said. “The police are dominated by the gangs. You go to complain about a gangster and a little while later, they know about it.”

Lawyers have argued with mixed success that girls who face rape and servitude to notorious criminal bands in Central America constitute a persecuted social group.

They’ve also argued that kids who resist gang recruitment and face brutal retaliation are a social group, along with kids who witness crimes where police are either incapable or too corrupt to protect them from retaliation.

Lawyers for Maria at the Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project submitted a legal memo arguing that the teenager is a witness to crime who requires protection because she is vulnerable to retaliation.

[Patricia Ortiz](#), Esperanza’s managing attorney, is confident that the kids whose cases she’s taken are truthful.

“Just because all of them are telling similar stories does not mean that they are lying,” she said. “It just means that they’re living in a country where they are not safe, and they’re in a country where they can’t walk out into the street without being afraid of being murdered or hurt or facing some kind of harm.”

Former asylum officer Manny said officers are trained to spot stories that raise suspicions. They receive bulletins if details in multiple applicants’ stories seem oddly similar.

“What to look for,” he said of children, “is basically the consistency of their testimony, whether they seem like they believe it or whether they seem to be speaking vicariously through someone else.”

### **Gang refusal a reason for asylum?**

The outcome of a case may also depend on how higher-level federal courts have ruled on asylum cases.

In 2012, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, based in Richmond, Virginia, [upheld](#) an immigration board's denial of an asylum claim based on arguments that young Honduran males who had refused to join a gang — and reported harassment to police — were a distinct persecuted group.

Opposition to gangs and resisting recruitment is too much of an “amorphous characteristic,” the court said, for determining group membership.

But in 2013, the Ninth Circuit, based in San Francisco, [reversed an asylum denial](#) for a young girl based on arguments she lacked status within an obviously persecuted social group.

The case involved a 12-year-old who had testified in open court in El Salvador that she saw gang members assault her father and heard shots that killed him. She also said she was threatened for testifying and fled to the United States.

Her case had previously reached the Board of Immigration Appeals, the BIA, the highest review body within the immigration system. The BIA rejected the argument the girl, as a witness to crime, met the threshold of “social visibility” needed for a social group argument.

The Ninth Circuit disagreed, finding that witnesses to crimes were a distinct social group, even if they were not visible to “the naked eye.”

In Chicago this summer, lawyers for a 15-year-old from Guatemala framed his asylum bid by describing him as a member of two social groups: minors who resist gang recruitment and kids who are witnesses to crime.

Francisco, as he asked to be called, came north more than a year ago and was interviewed by an asylum officer in August. His voice still sounds like a young boy's.

In detail, Francisco recounted what he told an asylum officer. Gangsters gave him and a friend messages warning them to join up, or die. Francisco's friend mocked the gangsters, who were also children, when he tossed a written message he'd been given to the ground. His friend was shot in an ambush on the street that sent Francisco running for his life. “I saw a bullet hit near me,” he said.

Francisco said he spoke to a police detective at his friend's wake, and he and his mother tried to shield themselves from reprisal by moving. But Francisco said hoods younger than he found them, and his father in Chicago, fearing his son would be killed, arranged to have him smuggled up to the United States.

The asylum officer asked Francisco details about various parts of his story, and showed particular interest in his interactions with the detective and concerns about retaliation, the boy's lawyers said.

The social group “rubric” is one of “the most common types of asylum claims nowadays — and it's also one of the most complex,” said Ashley Huebner, managing attorney of the [National Immigrant Justice Center's](#) Immigrant Children's Protection Project, which represents Francisco.

Huebner said she can't imagine minors without lawyers trying to sort out what parts of their story are more relevant than others. Former asylum officer Manny agreed. “An attorney's brief can shed light on a lot of things that may not be expressed clearly by the child.”

Huebner said she doesn't expect an answer on Francisco's request for months.

### **Lawyers' quests to find documents**

Gladis Molina, a nonprofit attorney in Phoenix, Arizona, said she feels an awesome responsibility taking on kids' cases. But she says she's also had to turn away kids whose stories simply don't meet the threshold for asylum or some other type of relief from deportation.

A first-generation Salvadoran-American, Molina, 34, manages the children's program for the [Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Program](#). Her father left El Salvador during its bloody civil war in the 1980s and received amnesty in 1986, during the Reagan administration.

She warns her clients that they must expect "for their story to be turned upside, downside, inward and outward because you get asked so many details."

Some kids' stories are so horrible, Molina said, she weeps as she listens. She's also had agonized clients call her in the middle of night and say, "Lawyer, I don't feel like living anymore. Life is just not worth living. I'm not happy. I feel lonely."

Molina recently prepared a complex case on behalf of a Salvadoran girl, who was 17 when she filed her application. She recently turned 18. In mid-September she underwent an interview with an asylum officer for 2 ½ hours.

The girl claims she was raped by a gangster in what may have been an initiation rite. The girl's mother, who lived in Fresno, California, is now deceased. The young woman came north to join relatives, was detained and is now terrified to return to El Salvador because the alleged rape was reported to child-welfare services. The rapist is in jail, but like many behind bars in El Salvador, the girl says, he has the ability to order a hit on her.

Up until the girl's interview, Molina was trying to get child-welfare records from El Salvador to bolster her argument that the girl qualifies as a member of a social group — women exploited by gangs — who would face deadly retaliation if deported.

"I want those records," Molina said.

Molina and another attorney called and emailed a child-welfare administrator and were told the girl would need to give someone in El Salvador power of attorney to release the records. Molina tried her own family connections as well to see if she could get someone on the ground to get the documents.

"I remembered that a cousin of mine knew a doctor whose wife worked for the government agency that oversees real estate taxation," Molina said. "So I sent her an email and said, 'I'm an American attorney. You don't know me, but my cousin knows your husband. Can you please help me get these documents?'"

If her client is rejected by the asylum officer and has to go on to an immigration court hearing, Molina said, she intends to redouble efforts to get the records.

Asylum officers will not reject a child's claim solely because adults failed to generate documentation of abuses. But officers can ask to see certain documents, and lawyers must provide a reason, in writing, why records could not be obtained.

If you can obtain them, Molina said, records can show that a child's terrible story is "in fact what happened and not something that she's just conveniently recounting in America to avoid deportation."

**"An unbelievable story"**

In 2009, [Damion Robinson](#) was just two years out of the University of California at Los Angeles' law school and a young L.A. business attorney when his firm took on an asylum case, pro bono, that required extraordinary effort — and money — to pursue, and ultimately win in November 2010. Robinson led the effort, and among the key pieces of evidence he chased down was a trove of records related to a Guatemalan girl's story of sustained abuse at the hands of a local crime boss.

Robinson got involved when Kids In Need of Defense, or KIND, approached the firm he worked for at the time, Sullivan & Cromwell LLP. The firm enthusiastically embraced the case as a pro bono service, Robinson said.

Today, at 31, Robinson handles clients that run the gamut from start-up companies to Fortune 500 firms at Van Vleck Turner & Zaller, also in L.A. He's eager to represent another minor.

"It was hard to say no, frankly," the Seattle native said when he began to gather facts about the Guatemalan for what turned out to be a nearly 18-month case.

A Spanish-speaking female assistant helped Robinson slowly unravel the history of the girl, who was living with a relative in L.A. after release from a shelter. At times, Robinson would have to leave the room to let the girl first disclose privately to the woman assistant details of being repeatedly raped, held captive, giving birth at 14, held captive again and beaten and threatened with weapons.

"Her story was unbelievable in a way," Robinson said. "It was just something I couldn't even imagine happening .... There was a long, long history of sexual assault and violence, physical violence, against her that was just horrifying."

The girl said she was first kidnapped by an older man when she was 12 years old. She said the man ran a gang with impunity in a small city. Robinson was amazed to learn that the girl's mother had persistently filed criminal and civil complaints and obtained restraining orders that local justice officials did not enforce.

The girl's mother finally sent her daughter out of Guatemala with a smuggler to remove her from the clutches of the man.

A tale that initially felt like it might be exaggerated became vividly real after Robinson and others labored four months to track down copies of the civil and criminal complaints and restraining orders.

"In the U.S., you would just call the clerk and have them send over the court records," Robinson said, spreading on a table copies of documents in Spanish emblazoned with official stamps.

It was a struggle, he said, with some hired hands demanding exorbitant rates — and then failing to come through. His firm eventually spent at least \$9,000 locating and hiring various law groups and services in Guatemala that work to retrieve documents from archives and agencies.

His teen client, he said, "wouldn't have been able to pay to have that happen. And I think it was pretty instrumental to our case to have those records and have that proof, rather just being her word about what happened."

And Robinson ultimately went even further.

## NEWS REPORTS ON UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS

At the suggestion of Kids In Need of Defense, he contacted [Patrick Atkinson](#), an American who works with exploited minors in Guatemala. Eventually Atkinson, who runs a children's welfare group called God's Child, flew up on his own dime for the girl's hearing in 2010.

Robinson's client turned 18 after filing for asylum. At that time, the assigned asylum officer said the law didn't grandfather her into the asylum office as a minor — it would now — so her case was sent back to a judge.

She ended up having a trial-like hearing, testifying for more than two hours with a government attorney opposing her claim for asylum. At one point, Robinson said, the government lawyer argued that the restraining orders showed law enforcement was capable of protecting the girl back in Guatemala.

Atkinson, the expert witness, said he testified at the hearing because he was convinced the gangster would have seized the girl immediately had she been deported back and killed her with impunity.

"The mother did a number of reports about rape, about assault, about domestic violence, and the police reports are there," Atkinson said. But it's common, he said, for authorities to be frightened into doing nothing.

"There's different ways of blackmailing the judges and the police," he said. "Fear is by far the most powerful."

That's the kind of scenario that frightens the Salvadoran girl Maria and her father, who asked to be called Miguel.

Miguel has lived and worked legally in the United States since 2001. That's when natural disasters that devastated Central America led to the U.S. government to grant temporary protected status, still in effect today, to undocumented immigrants from the region: about 212,000 Salvadorans and 64,000 Hondurans.

Miguel speaks fluent English now and has a good job driving long-distance trucks. His temporary legal status provides stability. But it's officially temporary. And it didn't allow him to rescue Maria from El Salvador by sponsoring her to come here legally.

Miguel felt Maria was at risk for being killed in El Salvador, and he feared the local thugs extorting her would demand ever-increasing payments until he simply couldn't afford it.

So he scraped together \$7,500 with help from family and paid it to a smuggler to get Maria out. He didn't intend for her to get caught. But he was overjoyed when a Border Patrol agent called and said she was in custody after a harrowing raft ride over the river in Texas' Rio Grande Valley.

Maria spent months in a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-run shelter in Houston, Texas, after her detention. Then she was transferred to a foster family in Los Angeles while federal officials vetted Miguel.

Now father and daughter live together in a South Central Los Angeles bungalow, where they're getting to know each other. He always had a long-distance relationship with her but left when she was an infant. Maria's mom is in El Salvador. Miguel has a new wife and a young son in Los Angeles.

To strengthen Maria's asylum claim, attorneys were able to persuade teachers and a pastor in El Salvador to provide written statements about her character and history. Lawyers also submitted a news article about her friend's killing, and United Nations and U.S. government reports about dangers in El Salvador.

“Gang intimidation and violence against witnesses contributed to a climate of impunity from criminal prosecution,” said the State Department’s [2013 El Salvador Human Rights Report](#).

Lawyers were also hoping to submit Maria’s murdered friend’s death certificate. But when Miguel persuaded a relative in El Salvador to approach the dead girl’s father to obtain the confidential report, the father declined.

“He said, ‘No, I can’t help you guys because I have more kids in my house, and I don’t want them to get killed like my daughter,’” Miguel said.

Miguel said he doesn’t fault the father for refusing to help.

Dissolving into tears, Miguel said, “I can’t even imagine how he is suffering now or the kind of life he is living because he’s afraid for his other kids and knowing he cannot search for justice for his daughter.”

The Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project has turned away other Central American minors who’ve asked if for help in obtaining asylum. The attorneys won’t take on cases they don’t believe have merit, managing lawyer Patricia Ortiz said. But their work is exploding, with more than 60 cases involving minors seeking asylum.

The responsibility, Ortiz, 30, said, “is a little bit terrifying.”

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## **Wall Street Journal**

10/06/14

**Those Migrant Children Belong With Their U.S. Families  
Stop the deportations to Central America and do more to end the poverty that drives desperate attempts to flee.**

By Robert M. Morgenthau

One of the goals of any sensible immigration policy should be to unite family members and keep them together. Our government should not be taking children away from their parents or close relatives and deporting them back to home countries wracked by drug-related violence and poverty.

But that is exactly what is happening with the children who have fled to this country from Central America.

According to Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, the government has been deporting several thousand migrants a week to Central America thanks to the addition of more aircraft and flights to return them. Cecilia Muñoz, the director of domestic policy at the White House, told “PBS NewsHour” in June that “the deportation process starts when they get here” and it is likely that “the vast majority of those kids end up going back.”

Mr. Johnson said last month that “aggressive border security measures” deployed in response to the migrations have already cost \$405 million. The Obama administration has asked Congress for an additional \$1.2 billion to build detention centers and temporary immigration courts to speed this process up further, as well as to construct more barriers and increase border patrols to keep the children out.

The government’s single-minded focus on enforcement and deportation is misguided and morally indefensible.

Under a 2008 anti-human-trafficking law, unaccompanied children detained at the border are initially placed in the care of the Health and Human Services Department’s Office of Refugee Resettlement. The children are then transferred to the custody of a parent, close relative or qualified sponsor while they go through removal proceedings. As of July, almost 90% of these children have been released to relatives or sponsors.

Migrant children who have been reunited with their parents or close family members must be allowed to stay, and President Obama can issue temporary visas that will exempt them from deportation. President Franklin D. Roosevelt took similar action during World War II to bring nearly 1,000 Jewish refugees from Italy to the safety of Fort Ontario, N.Y.

The public would support Mr. Obama. A survey conducted in July by the nonprofit Public Religion Research Institute found that 62% of Americans—including a majority of the Republicans polled—believed that migrant children should be treated as refugees and allowed to remain in the U.S. if their home countries are unsafe.

Instead the government has been speeding through deportation hearings. TRAC, a Syracuse University policy group, recently reported that, on average, juveniles in Phoenix waited only 66 days before their cases were heard by an immigration judge. In contrast, other immigration cases in Phoenix had an average wait time of 805 days. Juvenile cases were processed even faster in Omaha, Neb., where the average wait time was 10 days compared with 840 days for all other cases.

This breakneck pace raises serious concerns about whether Central American migrant children are receiving due process of law. Are they getting legal representation? Do they have the opportunity to develop and present their asylum claims? Every immigrant is entitled to a full and fair hearing.

More fundamentally, the Obama administration and Congress need to recognize that deporting more migrant children will not stop others from fleeing violence and poverty in Central America. Enforcement measures like higher walls and more armed guards are poor deterrents.

The root causes of the migration from Central America are crime and poverty. A wiser U.S. policy would provide more foreign aid to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, where money is needed to fight drug cartels and street gangs, improve public education and revive the economy.

Violence in these countries is rampant, fueled by drug cartels and street gangs that use Central America as the bridge between the drug supply in South America and the drug demand in the U.S. The security situation in Honduras has deteriorated so much that the Peace Corps has pulled out its volunteers. For similar reasons the Peace Corps also has scaled back its operations in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Foreign aid could be used in these countries to improve their militaries and police forces, which in turn could combat the cartels and restore security. Mr. Obama should direct the Drug Enforcement

Administration to focus particular attention on drug dealers from these countries who supply the U.S. market.

Economic woe in Central America has meant fewer jobs and more poverty. In July the leaders of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras appealed to Mr. Obama and Congress for monetary assistance that could be used to promote economic growth. We should provide that aid, both to the Central American governments and to nongovernmental organizations working in those countries on these issues. Personal safety and a chance at making a decent living would encourage children to stay in their home countries.

However, for the children who are already here and have rejoined their U.S.-based relatives, we must show compassion and keep them together with their families. Continuing to throw billions of dollars into deportations, detention centers and fences will not only break up families but is doomed to failure, wasting billions of taxpayer money.

*Mr. Morgenthau, Manhattan district attorney from 1975 to 2009, is of counsel with the law firm of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz.*

## Michigan Live

10/06/14

### Enterovirus outbreak likely not coming from undocumented children, experts say

By Emily Lawler

LANSING, MI – **Rush Limbaugh** and **conservative bloggers** have implied a link between undocumented children from Central America and the spread of enterovirus, but public health experts say that's simply not the case.

Enterovirus is a common illness. This year a particular strain of it, known as EV-D68, has shown up at higher rates and is particularly affecting asthmatic children. EV-D68 has been detected in specimens from four patients who died, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), but the agency is still investigating the role that the infection played in the deaths. Some patients, including **one in Michigan**, have also experienced paralysis. In Michigan, there have been 25 cases of enterovirus **confirmed**.

Enterovirus was first detected in the United States in 1962, according to the CDC. The specific EV-D68 strain was first detected in 1987, said Eden Wells, Clinical Associate Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Michigan School of Public Health.

“I think that this really sort of argues against the fact that this is a new virus introduced by anybody,” Wells said.

Dr. Matthew Davis, the state’s Chief Medical Executive with the Michigan Department of Community Health, said that “While it’s theoretically possible that someone from any part of the world can bring an infection to another part of the world, it seems unlikely that children from Central America have brought this particular enterovirus strain into the United States.”

What’s different about the EV-D68 virus is that it seems to be affecting children with respiratory illness and the CDC is investigating possible connections to limb weakness, paralysis and death.

Wells said that any new behaviors could be linked to the virus' evolution, which is something the CDC is investigating.

“I think that’s a very separate issue from trying to blame a certain group of people, because this has been circulating around the state for a couple of decades,” Wells said.

Davis said he did not know whether the EV-D68 strain was common in Central America.

There is no vaccination for enterovirus, but when it comes to other diseases many people may not be aware that undocumented children are vaccinated by medical professionals through a CDC program before being sent into communities, Davis said.

“Only when children were healthy either on their initial screen or when they had recovered for whatever illness they had when they immigrated were they then placed in communities around the country,” Davis said.

Wells too pointed to the CDC vaccinations at the border. But she said that unvaccinated children in general can pose a risk to public health.

“The issue isn’t where they’re from. The issue is what is their vaccination status? And if they are not vaccinated and they’re going to be in a situation where they can spread disease that could be a problem,” Wells said.

Davis said he understand how upsetting it is to have this virus infecting children, but “we know how to reduce the spread of viruses like this one.”

He said frequent hand washing and parents keeping sick children home from school were effective ways to prevent the spread of any virus.

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## **Miami Herald**

10/06/14

### **Obama administration releases funds to help pay for attorneys to represent undocumented minors**

By Alfonso Chardy, [achardy@elnuevoherald.com](mailto:achardy@elnuevoherald.com)

The federal government recently announced a new program to provide legal representation for unaccompanied minors in deportation proceedings in several cities across the nation, including Miami.

The program would benefit a small number of children in proceedings. More than 66,000 unaccompanied children have crossed the Mexican border between Oct. 1, 2013, and Aug. 31 this year. The new program would provide attorneys to only 1,222 children this year and only 1,378 children next year.

The program, nevertheless, responds to demands by immigrant rights activists that the foreign children should not be forced to stand before an immigration judge without legal representation. Activists cite statistics showing that foreign children who have attorneys assisting them in immigration court stand a better chance of avoiding deportation.

In June, the Department of Justice announced an initial limited program to provide some legal representation to some of the unaccompanied children. Since then, immigrant rights organizations have urged private lawyers across the country to volunteer their services as pro bono attorneys for more children.

The latest program, announced last week, will be overseen by the administration for children and families Office of Refugee Resettlement of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The agency administers a program that provides shelters and other services to unaccompanied children.

According to HHS, the agency plans to provide \$9 million to two refugee assistance organizations to finance the attorney programs in 2014 and 2015. The disbursement this year amounts to \$4.2 million.

The agency plans to disburse the funds to the Washington-based U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) in Arlington, Va.

An HHS official said that attorneys working under the program will be active in several U.S. cities. Those cities include Miami, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, Memphis, New Orleans, Phoenix, Baltimore and Arlington.

**CNN**

10/03/14

**Women at Texas immigrant detention center say they were sexually abused**

By CNN Wire

(CNN) — Women detained at an immigrant holding facility in southern Texas allege workers there have sexually abused them, including by removing them from their cells at night for sex as well as fondling them in front of others, lawyers wrote in a letter to federal officials this week.

Some guards or other workers at the Karnes County Residential Center also asked sexual favors of female detainees in exchange for money or promises of assistance — including help with their immigration cases or shelter if they are released — the lawyers allege in the letter.

The allegations were detailed in a Tuesday letter from several immigrant advocacy groups to officials with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security, which had hired one of America's for-profit prison operators to run the facility.

“We call for an immediate investigation into these serious allegations of sexual abuse and the immediate protection of all women and children forced to reside in the facility,” the letter, sent by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) on behalf of all the advocacy groups, reads.

**Company denies claims, says center is ‘family-friendly’**

Geo Group Inc., the company that runs the facility, told CNN it strongly refutes the allegations.

“The Karnes County Residential Center provides a safe, clean, and family-friendly environment for mothers and children awaiting required processing by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency,” the Geo Group’s vice president of corporate relations, Pablo Paez, said. “The center provides high quality care, and our company strongly denies any allegations to the contrary.”

CE told CNN it couldn’t discuss specifics about this case. But it said it “has a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of sexual abuse or assault and our facilities are maintained in accordance with applicable laws and policies.”

“Accusations of alleged unlawful conduct are investigated thoroughly and if substantiated, appropriate action is taken,” the agency said in a written statement.

The center is one of many in the country that hold undocumented immigrants — many apprehended as they crossed into the United States — as they await hearings on whether they will be deported. ICE detained 440,557 people across the nation in fiscal 2013.

The Karnes County facility can [hold up to 532 detainees](#), and transitioned this summer from a center that housed adults to one that holds adults and children.

The sexual abuse is alleged to have happened since August, the lawyers’ letter says.

[Wall Street bets on prison growth from border crisis](#)

“Numerous” women made the allegations to lawyers representing them, and at least three center employees committed the abuse, the letter said.

The letter came five days after one of the advocacy groups made other allegations about the center’s treatment of women and children.

In a September 25 letter, the immigration clinic at the University of Texas School of Law asked federal immigration officials to investigate numerous complaints from detainees, including that children didn’t have access to a variety of nutritious snacks between meals, that messages from attorneys weren’t getting to their clients in a timely manner, and that — although they had access to a nurse — no doctor was on staff to handle significant medical issues such as respiratory infections and chronic illnesses.

Geo Group said it refutes those allegations, as well, and that ICE personnel are at the site to ensure compliance with the agency’s family residential standards.

**Removing female detainees from their cells’ for sex**

MALDEF’s letter from Tuesday accuses facility workers of “removing female detainees from their cells late in the evening and during early morning hours for the purpose of engaging in sexual acts in various parts of the facility.”

Also, workers called detainees “their ‘novias,’ or ‘girlfriends,’ ” and requested “sexual favors from female detainees in exchange for money, promises of assistance with their pending immigration cases, and shelter when and if the women are released,” the advocates alleged.

Workers also kissed, fondled and groped detainees in front of other detainees, including children, the advocates alleged.

The women reported the allegations to center personnel, but “to date, no action has been taken to stop or prevent this abuse,” the letter reads.

The advocates further argue that the center “provides an environment that facilitates the abuse,” in part by having a guard roster that is predominantly male, and by allowing the guards 24-hour access to the detainees’ rooms.

The letter warns the alleged harassment and “unsafe environment” likely violates several federal laws and regulations, and asks for a response detailing what ICE and the center will do to address the matter.

## **Associated Press**

09/30/14

### **Government funds lawyers for immigrant children**

By AMY TAXIN

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) — The Obama administration is spending \$4 million on lawyers for unaccompanied immigrant children in deportation proceedings, a move an influential Republican lawmaker says is illegal and will fuel an increase in illegal immigration.

[Kenneth Wolfe](#), a spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services' [Administration for Children and Families](#), said on Tuesday that it is the first time the office that oversees programs for unaccompanied immigrant children will provide money for direct legal representation.

The grants to two organizations are part of a bigger \$9 million project that aims to provide lawyers to 2,600 children. The move comes after the number of unaccompanied Central American children arriving on the U.S.-Mexico border more than doubled this past year, many of them fleeing violence.

House [Judiciary Committee](#) Chairman [Bob Goodlatte](#), R-Virginia, said the funding violates federal law "and only makes the problem worse by encouraging more illegal immigration in the future." He urged the government to focus its efforts on deterring future border crossers.

Most of the nearly 60,000 unaccompanied children who arrived on the border in the last year don't have attorneys, and immigrant advocates have been scrambling to secure grant funding and ramp up efforts to recruit and train pro bono lawyers to take on their cases.

After being detained by federal authorities, children are placed in shelters overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services until they can be released to a relative or sponsor in the United States. The children are then given a date to appear in immigration court for deportation proceedings, though many will seek to remain in the country by applying for asylum or other forms of immigration relief.

In the past, Wolfe's agency has funded know-your-rights presentations, legal screenings and efforts to recruit and train pro bono lawyers, but not direct legal representation, he said. The grants issued to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants for legal services in cities including Los Angeles, Houston and Miami would be formally announced later in the week, Wolfe said.

[Kevin Appleby](#), director of migration policy for the bishops' organization, said the funding is an important first step. "It is a recognition that many of these children have valid protection claims and they need legal help to navigate the process," he said.

Immigrants are allowed to have counsel in immigration courts, but lawyers are not guaranteed or provided at government expense. Immigrant advocates have filed a federal lawsuit in Seattle demanding the government provide attorneys for the children.

Having a lawyer can make a big difference: While almost half of children with attorneys were allowed to remain in the country, only 10 percent of those without representation were allowed to stay, according to an analysis of cases through June by the [Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University](#).

Earlier this year, the [Justice Department](#) announced plans to enroll about 100 lawyers and paralegals as members of AmeriCorps to provide legal assistance to unaccompanied immigrant children.

### **The New American**

09/30/14

#### **Crush of Illegal Immigrant Children Hits U.S. Schools**

Written by Warren Mass

As has been predicted by those who have been keeping count of the large number of illegal immigrant children who have crossed our borders from Central America during the past year, the flood of such children entering our schools is proving to be a logistical and financial burden for local school districts.

As AP education writer Kimberly Hefling noted in a September 29 report: "For cash-strapped districts, providing for these students' needs can be arduous, particularly if they arrive after student headcounts are taken to determine school funding."

Hefling's report spotlighted Sussex County, Delaware, where the local chicken processing facilities and farms have long attracted Spanish-speaking migrants. Though school districts in the county already had in place an early learning program for non-English-speaking students, they were nevertheless unprepared for the influx of 70 new Hispanic students, mostly from Guatemala, who enrolled at Sussex Central High School.

Donald Hattier, a school board member, told the reporter that advance warning would have helped with their planning. He explained that the federal government "just dropped this on us."

And the end is not in sight.

"The kids are still coming across the border. This problem has not been solved," Hattier said.

Indeed it hasn't, if Carl Meacham, the director of the Americas Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is correct. As we reported in our September 23 article, Meacham told the Madrid-based Efe news network on September 18:

The situation in Central America hasn't changed; we have the same problems of insecurity and violence, the lack of governability continues and jobs are still a problem — there is no work for young people who are members of cartels or street gangs.

Though the number of unaccompanied youths illegally entering our country has declined in recent months, "that won't last long," Meacham predicted.

One reason to think that the illegal immigration rate will soon rise is that the decline may be at least partially attributable to the intense heat in Mexico during the summer months, making the long, arduous trek even more brutal.

While the CSIS is predicting a rise in the numbers of young migrants coming here illegally from Central America, their solution is not increased border security, more efficient processing of these young illegal aliens by our immigration courts, or more aggressive deportation of them back to their countries of origin. Instead, the CSIS would like to see the Obama administration send aid to the Central American nations to help combat the gang activity that has caused many of the youths to flee their countries.

While the administration and members of Congress debate the best way to stem the tide, the flow of unaccompanied illegal immigrants continues.

One school district that has been hit hard by the flow of illegal children is the Jefferson Parish (Louisiana) School System. The Louisiana Department of Education responded to an inquiry from Sen. David Vitter (R-La.), by noting that the Jefferson Parish School System will be forced to hire dozens more staff to teach English to the more than 500 illegal alien children who have been relocated there by the federal government.

“It’s a very significant cost to the Louisiana taxpayer, and that’s just education,” Vitter told the *Washington Free Beacon*, which broke the story on September 18. “We have plenty of other categories that are impacted, like health care, emergency room and other health care, and other benefits. That’s just public education.”

Vitter’s remarks were based on information sent to him in a letter from John White, the Louisiana state Superintendent of Education, explaining that Jefferson Parish, located in Harvey, La., just outside New Orleans, will require an additional \$4.6 million to educate 533 unaccompanied alien children. The state’s average cost to educate a student is \$8,854 per year, but the figure for Jefferson Parish for the 2014-2015 school year will be \$9,047 per student.

The parish will need to hire 27 new English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers, 20 new “ESL para-educators,” 19 regular education teachers, and three special education teachers in order to meet the demands associated with the students who are there illegally.

Furthermore, said White, the state will not receive any additional funding from the federal government to deal with the increase.

According to a report (“Estimated Cost of K-12 Public Education for Unaccompanied Alien Children”) from the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) that came out in August, it will cost Louisiana \$25,829,748 to educate illegal alien minors during the upcoming school year.

FAIR’s figures for several other states are much higher, with New York topping the list with \$147,731,339, Texas with \$77,655,584, California with \$63,908,143, Maryland with \$67,937,602, New Jersey with \$57,698,181, Florida with \$56,773,589, and Virginia with \$54,182,412. The total estimated

cost of educating illegal alien minors during the upcoming school year for all states and the District of Columbia is \$761,405,907.

A report posted by *American Thinker* on July 8 explained that the Obama administration was using the 1982 U.S. Supreme Court opinion in *Plyler v. Doe* to pressure the states to provide elementary and secondary education at taxpayer expense to children who are illegal immigrants.

In *Plyler v. Doe*, the High Court struck down a Texas state statute denying funding for education to illegal immigrant children and simultaneously struck down a municipal school district's attempt to charge illegal immigrants an annual \$1,000 tuition fee for each illegal immigrant student to compensate for the lost state funding. The Court said that the Texas statute violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, because discrimination on the basis of illegal immigration status did not further a substantial state interest.

In the *American Thinker* article, the writer, Los Angeles attorney Allan Favish, presented the following case: “FAIR found that annually the estimated 195,000 illegal alien students and 481,000 U.S.-born children of illegal aliens place an \$8.5 billion burden on taxpayers for their education costs.”

Favish cites FAIR’s estimate that the students who are illegally present in the country are 29 percent of the total number of students on which the \$8.5 billion amount is based. Twenty-nine percent of \$8.5 billion amounts to \$2.465 billion, a burden that the states could credibly claim presents a substantial state interest that should relieve them of the burden of educating these children. This would easily satisfy the *Plyler* criteria and allow Texas to deny illegal immigrants a taxpayer-funded elementary and secondary education, without conflicting with *Plyler*, asserts Favish. He concludes his argument:

Various states, including Texas, may want to provide a taxpayer-funded elementary and secondary education to illegal immigrants. But they should not say that *Plyler* requires them to do so. Nor should they allow the Obama administration to falsely state that *Plyler* requires them to.

**The Daily Nebraskan**

**TYRRELL: U.S. needs welcoming arms to children immigrants**

By Savannah Tyrrell on September 29th, 2014

What could our nation do with \$90 billion? The answer: a lot. We could cure ALS, donate 2,250,000,000 frozen meals to the poor or pay for 1,875,000 students' college education.

Instead, in the past decade, \$90 billion has been spent on "securing" our borders. This mass amount of money was spent on being inhumane; it was placed into a dead investment to keep people out of our country.

In 2001, a law was passed that shifted the way the Mexican-American border was policed. The Clinton Administration launched a policy to cut off the safe routes of migration. They predicted that this would stop people from risking their lives to cross into the U.S. Instead, it increased the deaths of those who continued to leave their countries to come to ours.

The faces of children make this sad story even more disheartening.

According to Katie Couric, in the past nine months, over 50,000 unaccompanied children have illegally entered the U.S. Some of the children making this journey are toddlers. Parents are risking their babies' lives because the threat of staying in their country is greater than traveling thousands of miles on a child-smuggling path, to a place where they won't be accepted. Honduras, for example, has the highest murder rate in the world.

Opponents of illegal immigration don't want their tax dollars spent on immigrant children and say, "it's simple; they broke the law." However, these arguments become invalid with the following counter arguments: Nothing regarding a human life is simple. And just so everyone is clear, the \$90 BILLION mentioned above is taxpayers' money that hasn't solved the issue of immigration.

How many deaths by immigration does it take to say enough is enough?

I recently watched a documentary titled "Who is Dayani Cristal?" Arizona border patrol found a dead man lying in the desert, flies surrounding his corpse. There was indication that he died with only the comfort of hot desert sand and an empty water canister. He had no identifying features, just another human that would soon take the name of John Doe and be placed in a freezer among thousands of other immigrants who perished while chasing the American dream. The only identifier was a tattoo on his chest reading: Dayani Cristal.

The documentary paints an all too vivid picture of migrants that embark on a journey to America – to try to maintain their dignity, to support their family or to avoid being killed in the confines of their own country. In John Doe's case, to support Dayani Cristal – the dead man's beautiful daughter. Instead Dayani Cristal no longer has a father.

It's beyond me why people hide behind identifiers such as "Mexican-American border" versus "U.S. border" to excuse being merciless to fellow humans struggling to survive. These are beings – often children – with hearts and souls, with intelligence and distinctive experiences to share, with individual uniqueness that we'll never again have a chance to appreciate unless we do something drastic.

The unforgiving severity of those who are anti-immigration reminds me too much of the chilling, historical statement referencing Nazi invasion: "First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out – Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out – Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me."

The situation surrounding these words differ on surface-level, but when you dive deeper you see that our differences, whether it be religion, skin color or the border we were born under, don't make us that different. We need to speak up for each other while we still can.

Contrary to some arguments, we have abundant resources compared to countries such as Honduras, Guatemala or El Salvador. An example reported by CBS News was regarding The Holy Family Institute, a Catholic home for children outside Pittsburgh. The institute served as a temporary home for children caught crossing the Mexican-American border. Chief Executive officer, Sister Linda Chanowski said, "I realized we had the expertise ... the resources and we had the room in our hearts." A Nicaraguan immigrant commented on Chanowski's plan, asking for acceptance, "[Helping each other] is what we're called to do as human beings."

I understand there are bedrock principles that differentiate us; the issue of how we should treat marginalized groups is one of those principles. Regardless of which party affiliation you hide under, we must start using our resources for a different solution for those that need an out from their suffering and dangerous countries.

Republican senator Rand Paul said, "[We] must get beyond the issue of deportation in order to break through to the Hispanic voters and address other pressing issues facing the community."

Because really, who is this extreme security benefiting? Taxpayers are still collectively missing billions of dollars and deaths along the border are increasing.

"Who is Dayani Cristal?" summarizes my argument: "Illegality comes before life ... health or someone's children. You'd think we'd want to be human before making someone less legal. Not to mention we rarely discuss the fact that we benefit from a blue-collar labor force that has brown skin. Immigrants are not a threat ... they are heroes shedding light on what we must change. They come here with a dream ... they end up being a number, a statistic."

It's time to reignite the mission of the welcoming woman, Lady Liberty, and Emma Lazarus's poem: "send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me." The difference: We now need welcoming arms in the opposite corner of our country.

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**Associated Press/NBC Bay Area**

09/28/14

**Calif. Gov. Brown Signs Bill for Lawyers for Immigrant Kids**

VIDEO: <http://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/Gov-Brown-Signs-Bill-for-Lawyers-for-Immigrant-Kids-277370471.html>

Gov. Jerry Brown on Saturday signed into law a bill to fund lawyers for unaccompanied minors in immigration proceedings following a surge in the arrival of Central American children on the border. The legislation appropriates \$3 million to qualified nonprofit organizations to help represent the children in deportation proceedings.

Nearly 60,000 unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have arrived on the U.S.-Mexico border in the last fiscal year, many fleeing gang threats and violence. Federal government data shows more than 4,600 of the children have been sent to live with sponsors in California. State Senator Ricardo Lara, chair of the Latino Legislative Caucus, welcomed the signing of the bill into law.

"Deportation for some of these kids is tantamount to a virtual death sentence so it's important that they have access to the adequate legal representation," Lara said in a statement.

Immigrant advocates have been ramping up efforts to recruit more volunteer lawyers to take on the children's cases, noting most unaccompanied minors don't have attorneys.

Brown also signed legislation to clarify the role of state courts in making findings to let unaccompanied minors apply for a federal government program that awards green cards to abused and abandoned children.

Some of the children who recently arrived on the border will apply for special immigrant juvenile status, while others may seek asylum.

**Reno Gazette Journal**

09/27/14

**Pro bono lawyers sought for immigrant children**

LOS ANGELES – Most of the nearly 60,000 Central American children who have arrived on the U.S.-Mexico border in the last year still don't have lawyers to represent them in immigration court, and advocates are scrambling to train volunteer attorneys to help cope with the massive caseload.

With the number of unaccompanied immigrant children more than doubling this past fiscal year, the need for attorneys has surged, and it has been exacerbated by the immigration courts' decision to fast-track children's cases, holding initial hearings within a few weeks instead of months.

Immigrants can have counsel in immigration courts, but lawyers are not guaranteed or provided at government expense. Having an attorney can make a big difference: While almost half of children with attorneys were allowed to remain in the country, only 10 percent of those without representation were allowed to stay, according to an analysis of cases through June by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University.

Efforts are underway from White Plains, N.Y., to New Orleans to train attorneys at private law firms on the country's byzantine immigration laws and how to work with traumatized, Spanish-speaking children, many of whom are fleeing violence — a far cry from the corporate clients most deal with on a daily basis.

“We’re doing pretty well on finding willing lawyers. We’ve got to get them trained, we’ve got to get them matched to that child,” said Reid Trautz, director of the American Immigration Lawyers Association’s practice and professionalism center. “It just takes time.”

Last month, Democratic Vice President Joe Biden urged lawyers to increase efforts to take on the children’s cases. Since then, the cities of San Francisco and New York have each announced plans to allocate roughly \$2 million to help provide more lawyers for unaccompanied minors. California has appropriated \$3 million toward the effort.

About 800 immigration lawyers have signed up to volunteer on the cases, the immigration lawyers association said.

So have many other attorneys without any background in immigration law. They are being trained and paired with experienced immigration practitioners, who serve as mentors.

“We’ve had tax lawyers do this, corporate lawyers, real estate — anybody can do it,” said Ricardo Martinez-Cid, president of the Cuban American Bar Association, which started a program earlier this year to represent unaccompanied children in Miami.

Immigrant advocates say the efforts are working, but not as quickly as desired. Nonprofit organizations have been boosting staff, but there aren’t enough experienced immigration lawyers to take on the cases or to mentor volunteers. Nor is there enough long-term funding for cases that can take more than a year to resolve, they said.

“It is very much a triage situation, and it is very, very frustrating because you know when someone calls and you turn them away, it is very unlikely they’ll find counsel,” said Judy London, directing attorney of the immigrants’ rights project at Los Angeles-based Public Counsel.

Some children will apply for green cards under a federal program for abused and abandoned children, while others who came fleeing violence in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are seeking asylum.

One of the biggest challenges for volunteer lawyers is getting clients to open up about their lives when they have been beaten, raped or seen friends and family killed.

Three of the 30 children whose cases are being handled by Public Counsel have a history of suicide attempts or risk of suicide, London said. Most children are not going to feel comfortable walking into a fancy law firm and would probably run from the building, she said, unless an attorney meets the child outside and walks jointly through the door.

Jack Ross, an attorney in Southern California, said he met with a 16-year-old client four times before he told his full story. The boy, who arrived in the country two years ago, fled years of violence from his father and a police department that refused to protect him, he said.

“It’s some of the most compelling legal work you can do, because the stakes are so high,” said Ross, who represents hospitals and care providers in negligence claims and contract disputes. “You become so emotionally invested in the client, their well-being is really at the forefront of everything, and that doesn’t happen a lot in law.”

Before the recent influx of unaccompanied children, only about half were represented, said Wendy Young, president of Kids in Need of Defense, a nonprofit that pairs volunteer lawyers with children. She could not say how many children now have lawyers, but said certainly fewer than before.

Advocates have sued to demand the government provide the children with attorneys at the government’s expense. The lawsuit is pending before a judge in Seattle.

They say children with representation are more likely to attend their court hearings.

This week, the Homeland Security Department acknowledged that tens of thousands of young families caught on the border failed to meet with federal immigration agents as instructed. A spokeswoman for Immigration and Customs Enforcement said she could not say whether they attended court hearings on their cases.

At a recent immigration court hearing in Los Angeles, most of the 19 children whose cases were scheduled showed up. Seven had attorneys. Others were accompanied by a relative, as the judge reviewed their names and ages.

Their guardians were given a handout with a list of low-cost legal service providers and told to return in December with a lawyer.

## **Los Angeles Times**

09/27/14

### **Gov. Brown signs bills aiding immigrant children, troubled students**

By Patrick McGreevy, Phil Willon contact the reporters

California Gov. Jerry Brown on Saturday signed legislation to provide \$3 million in legal aid for the thousands of unaccompanied minors from Central America who have flooded into the U.S. illegally this year.

The Democratic governor also approved a new law to limit suspensions and expulsions of students who "willfully defy" teachers and administrators, and he vetoed \$100 million that lawmakers had set aside for deferred maintenance at University of California and California State University campuses.

In addition, he OK'd the protection of G.I. Bill benefits for military veterans attending California colleges and changes in California's ballot initiative process.

The governor took action on the wide range of proposals ahead of a midnight Tuesday deadline to sign or veto hundreds of measures still on his desk.

California's century-old initiative process is a hallmark of our electoral system, and today we're taking an important step to modernize and strengthen direct democracy.- Governor Jerry Brown

The \$3 million to help the immigrant children, said Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens), will provide due process in the United States that will rescue some of them from the "virtual death sentence" they would face if deported to unsafe home countries.

"With the stroke of a pen, Governor Brown reaffirmed California's commitment to doing its part to address the unprecedented humanitarian crisis at [the] border involving Central American youth," Lara said in a statement.

The bill, SB 873, written by a budget committee, allocates money to nonprofit groups that will provide help to the children being held in California, who so far number about 4,000.

More than 60,000 unaccompanied children from poverty-stricken and violence-torn areas of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have been detained so far this year by U.S. Border Patrol agents.

Californians were divided over the proposal, according to a recent USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times poll. Nearly half of those polled call for the children to be immediately deported, with a similar number saying they should be allowed to stay in California as they await legal proceedings.

Brown also approved legislation that will limit the suspension of defiant students. Supporters of the measure said schools too often suspend or expel students for "willful defiance," which they criticized as a catch-all term that includes refusal to complete assignments or disruption of school activities.

"Kids who have been suspended or expelled are two times more likely to drop out and five times more likely to turn to crime," the bill's author, Assemblyman Roger Dickinson (D-Sacramento), said in a statement. "Rather than kicking students out of school, we need to keep young people in school on track to graduate and out of the criminal justice system."

The measure, AB 420, bans expulsions for such offenses in all grade levels and bars suspensions for students in kindergarten through third grade.

In another education-related move, Brown issued a line-item veto of a budget bill, stripping out \$50 million that lawmakers had approved for each of the two public university systems for long-needed repairs.

In his veto message, the governor said this year's budget would have provided \$200 million for deferred maintenance at the campuses and other state facilities if property tax revenue had exceeded expectations, which did not happen.

Brown said repairing aging infrastructure is a "major priority" for his administration. But he did not want to commit that much funding in a year when the state faces "unanticipated costs such as fighting the state's extreme wildfires."

Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins (D-San Diego) championed the funding increase and on Saturday vowed to address the issue next year.

The governor signed 21 bills to help and recognize military veterans and active-duty soldiers.

One guards the ability of 78,000 veterans to continue to enjoy benefits of the G.I. Bill while attending California universities and community colleges by requiring university and college officials to update in-state tuition policies.

The bill, AB 13 by Assemblywoman Connie Conway (R-Tulare), provides in-state tuition for veterans who were stationed in California immediately before being discharged.

Another allows the courts to create a diversion program for active military personnel or veterans who commit misdemeanors and are suffering from service-related trauma or drug abuse. The measure, SB 1227, is by Sen. Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley).

In addition, AB 1453 by Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton) was approved to create a new veterans' cemetery in Orange County.

It requires the state to work with local governments to design, develop, construct and equip a veterans' cemetery in the former Marine Corps Station El Toro in Irvine.

The state agency will apply for a grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to pay for the creation of the cemetery.

"Local veterans, many of whom risked their lives on foreign soil, deserve an honorable place that will provide their families and communities a true and lasting opportunity to pay their respects," Quirk-Silva said.

Also on Saturday, Brown hailed a bill he approved that will increase public and legislative review of proposed state ballot initiatives.

"California's century-old initiative process is a hallmark of our electoral system, and today we're taking an important step to modernize and strengthen direct democracy," the governor said in a statement.

The bill institutes a new 30-day public review period at the start of the initiative process, during which time proponents could opt to amend their proposals. And state legislative committees will hold public hearings on the measure.

Backers may subsequently withdraw a proposal if they wish, even after completed petitions have been submitted. Under existing law, initiatives cannot be withdrawn after petitions are filed.

The measure, SB 1253 by Senate leader Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), also extends the signature-gathering period from 150 to 180 days.

In addition, the state will have to post a list of the top 10 donors supporting and opposing an initiative. Currently, that information must be sought on a public database where campaigns file their fundraising reports.

In pushing the measure, Steinberg cited a survey last year by the Public Policy Institute of California that found 83% of voters feel the wording of initiatives is confusing, and 75% favor allowing more time for signature gathering.

But proponents would be under no obligation to heed recommendations from the public or the Legislature.

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## **Associated Press**

### **Help Wanted: Free Lawyers for Immigrant Children**

LOS ANGELES — Sep 27, 2014, 6:36 PM ET

By AMY TAXIN Associated Press

Most of the nearly 60,000 Central American children who have arrived on the U.S.-Mexico border in the last year still don't have lawyers to represent them in immigration court, and advocates are scrambling to train volunteer attorneys to help cope with the massive caseload.

With the number of unaccompanied immigrant children more than doubling this past fiscal year, the need for attorneys has surged, and it has been exacerbated by the immigration courts' decision to fast-track children's cases, holding initial hearings within a few weeks instead of months.

Immigrants can have counsel in immigration courts, but lawyers are not guaranteed or provided at government expense. Having an attorney can make a big difference: While almost half of children with attorneys were allowed to remain in the country, only 10 percent of those without representation were allowed to stay, according to an analysis of cases through June by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University.

Efforts are underway from White Plains, New York, to New Orleans to train attorneys at private law firms on the country's byzantine immigration laws and how to work with traumatized, Spanish-speaking children, many of whom are fleeing violence — a far cry from the corporate clients most deal with on a daily basis.

"We're doing pretty well on finding willing lawyers. We've got to get them trained, we've got to get them matched to that child," said Reid Trautz, director of the American Immigration Lawyers Association's practice and professionalism center. "It just takes time."

## NEWS REPORTS ON UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS

Last month, Vice President Joe Biden urged lawyers to increase efforts to take on the children's cases. Since then, the cities of San Francisco and New York have each announced plans to allocate roughly \$2 million to help provide more lawyers for unaccompanied minors. California has appropriated \$3 million toward the effort.

About 800 immigration lawyers have signed up to volunteer on the cases, the immigration lawyers association said.

So have many other attorneys without any background in immigration law. They are being trained and paired with experienced immigration practitioners, who serve as mentors.

"We've had tax lawyers do this, corporate lawyers, real estate — anybody can do it," said Ricardo Martinez-Cid, president of the Cuban American Bar Association, which started a program earlier this year to represent unaccompanied children in Miami.

Immigrant advocates say the efforts are working, but not as quickly as desired. Nonprofit organizations have been boosting staff, but there aren't enough experienced immigration lawyers to take on the cases or to mentor volunteers. Nor is there enough long-term funding for cases that can take more than a year to resolve, they said.

"It is very much a triage situation, and it is very, very frustrating because you know when someone calls and you turn them away, it is very unlikely they'll find counsel," said Judy London, directing attorney of the immigrants' rights project at Los Angeles-based Public Counsel.

Some children will apply for green cards under a federal program for abused and abandoned children, while others who came fleeing violence in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala are seeking asylum.

One of the biggest challenges for volunteer lawyers is getting clients to open up about their lives when they have been beaten, raped or seen friends and family killed.

Three of the 30 children whose cases are being handled by Public Counsel have a history of suicide attempts or risk of suicide, London said. Most children are not going to feel comfortable walking into a fancy law firm and would probably run from the building, she said, unless an attorney meets the child outside and walks jointly through the door.

## NEWS REPORTS ON UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS

Jack Ross, an attorney in Southern California, said he met with a 16-year-old client four times before he told his full story. The boy, who arrived in the country two years ago, fled years of violence from his father and a police department that refused to protect him, he said.

"It's some of the most compelling legal work you can do, because the stakes are so high," said Ross, who represents hospitals and care providers in negligence claims and contract disputes. "You become so emotionally invested in the client, their well-being is really at the forefront of everything, and that doesn't happen a lot in law."

Before the recent influx of unaccompanied children, only about half were represented, said Wendy Young, president of Kids in Need of Defense, a nonprofit that pairs volunteer lawyers with children. She could not say how many children now have lawyers, but said certainly fewer than before.

Advocates have sued to demand the government provide the children with attorneys at the government's expense. The lawsuit is pending before a judge in Seattle.

They say children with representation are more likely to attend their court hearings.

This week, the Homeland Security Department acknowledged that tens of thousands of young families caught on the border failed to meet with federal immigration agents as instructed. A spokeswoman for Immigration and Customs Enforcement said she could not say whether they attended court hearings on their cases.

At a recent immigration court hearing in Los Angeles, most of the 19 children whose cases were scheduled showed up. Seven had attorneys. Others were accompanied by a relative, as the judge reviewed their names and ages.

Their guardians were given a handout with a list of low-cost legal service providers and told to return in December with a lawyer.

**News Observer**

09/25/14

**Wake County praised for quickly registering unaccompanied immigrant children for school**

Posted by T. Keung Hui

The Wake County school system gets grief from some parents about what it takes to get registered, but an attorney who works with border children gives the state's largest school district high marks.

Matt Ellinwood, an attorney with the N.C. Justice Center, has helped the sponsors of unaccompanied immigrant children register for school around the Triangle. He said Wake County has done a better job than other districts at processing the registrations to get the children enrolled.

"Wake County has done a good job of enrolling students quickly," Ellinwood said. "They understand the importance of not delaying enrolling any child."

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that students are guaranteed the right to attend public schools regardless of their immigration status. But Ellinwood said that some school districts put up road blocks that have cost students months out of class.

Lisa Luten, a Wake schools' spokeswoman, pointed to the work of the district's Center for International Enrollment in helping these students get enrolled.

"They are dedicated to helping our international families who are moving or relocating to our school system," she said. "We value the diversity in our school system."

According to the latest figures, the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement relocated [188 unaccompanied children](#) to sponsors in Wake County between Jan. 1 and Aug. 31. During that same time period, North Carolina received [1,648 of the 43,419 unaccompanied children](#) relocated around the country after illegally trying to cross the southern border.

Read more here: [http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/09/25/4179007\\_wake-county-praised-for-quickly.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy](http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/09/25/4179007_wake-county-praised-for-quickly.html?rh=1#storylink=cpy)

**THE PRESS DEMOCRAT**

09/23/14

**Sonoma County approves legal aid to immigrant children**

BY ANGELA HART

Sonoma County supervisors Tuesday unanimously approved a plan would tap county attorneys to provide legal help to unaccompanied immigrant children who are in the Bay Area facing deportation proceedings.

The county does not know how many of the children are living here, but the board's action will allow County Counsel Bruce Goldstein to ask the Bar Association of San Francisco — where the nearest immigration court is located — to refer to them cases of minors in the North Bay. The Public Defender's Office is also participating in the effort, according to county spokesman Peter Rumble.

Goldstein said county legal offices are helping because under a new federal policy, children are having their cases expedited, giving them little time to find lawyers and build strong cases.

Border patrol agents picked up more than 66,000 unaccompanied children, most of them from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, along the southern U.S. border between Oct. 1, 2013, and the end of last month. They were turned over to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, then underwent medical checks and were given immunizations before being placed in shelters or with relatives and sponsors.

Tuesday's action did not have costs associated with it, but the county would provide staff time to help children.

"Because the time spent is during the course of the normal work day, there isn't a direct cost," Rumble said in an email.

Goldstein estimated he'll need about five to 10 attorneys in his office to handle a limited amount of cases, the most complicated of which could take up to 60 hours.

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**NewsMax.com**

09/23/14

**Report: New Surge of Illegal Border Children on the Way**

By Drew MacKenzie

A new wave of undocumented children are expected to swamp the border with Mexico in the next few weeks, according to [LatinTimes.com](#) citing experts and activists.

"The situation in Central America hasn't changed. We have the same problems of insecurity and violence, the lack of governability continues, and jobs are still a problem," said Carl Meacham, director of the Americas Program for the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#), told the Spanish news agency Efe.

"There is no work for young people who [become] members of cartels or street gangs," said Meacham while attempting to explain the reason that kids are drawn to the drug cartels.

He went on to say that the number of unaccompanied minors had declined during the past three months after a surge in May and June. But he added, "That won't last long."

President Barack Obama's decision to delay the passage of immigration reforms until after the November election will result in families paying "for their kids to be brought north, whatever the risks they run," the director said.

"There has been no legislation or change from the executive branch to eliminate the reasons why these children come to the United States," Meacham added.

According to [LatinTimes.com](#), the number of unaccompanied minors who had crossed the border was 66,000 in the fiscal year 2014, which began on October 1, 2013.

**MLive.com**

09/23/14

**Bay City Commission approves resolution supporting arrival of immigrant children**

BAY CITY, MI — With protesters at City Hall for the third time in two months, the Bay City Commission approved a controversial resolution that publicly puts the city's support behind the arrival of 24 undocumented immigrant children from Central America.

The resolution, co-authored by Commissioners Chad Sibley, 8th Ward, and Kerice Basmadjian, 7th Ward, passed on a 6-1 count at the commission's regular meeting on Monday, Sept. 22. Commissioner Lynn Stamiris, 1st Ward, voted against the resolution.

Commissioner Elizabeth Peters, 2nd Ward, abstained from voting, saying she disagreed with some of the language in the resolution. Commissioner Christopher Girard, 6th Ward, also abstained, saying his status as a foster parent through Wellspring Lutheran Services is a conflict of interest.

Following the vote, the Commission Chambers erupted into applause.

"I'm very happy," Sibley said. "This means a lot for Bay City."

The Central American children and teens are to be housed at a Bay City facility owned by Wellspring Lutheran Services and are expected to arrive sometime this month. They will range in age from 6 to 13 years old and stay between 30 and 45 days. Bay City officials have said the children will not stay longer than 90 days.

Wellspring secured a federal contract last month to house the undocumented youths.

Approving such a resolution likely makes Bay City one of the first communities in Michigan to take a stance, albeit symbolically, on the highly contentious national immigration and border control debate.

"Bay City has taken the lead to go public with this," said Gilberto Guevara, a commissioner with Gov. Rick Snyder's Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan, who attended Monday's meeting. "I know that the governor tips his hat off to you."

Nothing changes from the city's perspective following approval. City officials have said no local taxpayer resources will be used to assist in the housing of the children.

The resolution states that "Bay City welcomes these unaccompanied immigrant children," and encourages the public to assist in the "humanitarian relief effort" by:

- Publicly offering support through this resolution; and
- Supporting open communication between Wellspring Lutheran Services and the City Manager.

The resolution also calls upon federal officials to resolve the U.S. immigration issue.

Public comment during Monday's meeting was a debate in the truest sense. Nearly two dozen people spoke for more than hour. Mayor Christopher Shannon attempted to stop applause following comments on both sides of the debate, pleading for order, but to no avail.

Matt Villaire, of Bay City, ended his comments calling for the commission to support the children and approve the resolution, which resulted in a loud applause that lasted more than 10 seconds.

Tamyra Murray, a local leader with Michiganders for Immigration Control and Enforcement — or MICE — speaking against the resolution, asked the commissioners to abstain their vote, saying they put the children at risk for more exploitation. Following her comments, snickers and jeers were heard from the crowd.

Sandy Rogers, founder of Bay City United for Children, an advocacy group in support of the undocumented youths, said the approval brings calmness back to Bay City.

"It sends a message that Bay City is a welcoming city," she said. "Bay City is no place for hate."

Those who spoke at the meeting included Detroit resident, as well as people from neighboring counties in the Thumb.

Stamiris, the lone commissioner to vote against the resolution, said because Bay City already has laws in place that make it legal for Wellspring to house the Central American children, it doesn't need further permission from the City Commission.

"Everyone on this commission supports these children being here, but we can support it much better with our actions more than our words," Stamiris said. "Let's use our money, our time, our talents instead of our vote to make this a great stay for these children."

Commissioner Lori Dufresne, 4th Ward, said she was challenged by this vote, but said her affirmative vote was one for her constituents. Commissioner Andrew Niedzinski, 3rd ward, simply said it was the right thing to do. Commissioner Larry Elliott, 9th Ward, said the resolution sends a clear message to federal leaders to "stop playing party politics" and resolve the immigration issue.

Nearly 60,000 children and teens from the Central American countries have turned up at U.S. borders since October, and federal officials are deciding how to handle the influx of unauthorized immigrants.

It's unclear when this month the Central American children are to arrive.

Basmadjian, who is in her first year on the commission, said she wasn't surprised by the vote, based on her conversations with her fellow commissioners in the past few weeks.

"I'm very proud of the commission and very proud of the city that they would step up and support this," she said.

### **Hispanically Speaking News**

09/22/14

#### **NELSON BALIDO: Failed Immigration Policy Rears Its Ugly Head as Minors Stream Across Border**

Unaccompanied minors from Central America are flooding across the United States-Mexico border in response to rumors that American immigration policy is changing. The kids want in before it's too late.

A combination of gang violence, deteriorating living conditions and misinformation throughout Central America is fueling the surge of minors willing to risk it all in their attempts to reach the U.S.

All one has to do is look at places like Texas' Rio Grande Valley or bus depots and holding cells in Arizona to know that an overhaul of U.S. immigration policy is desperately needed. But Congress has failed to agree on a package of bills to send to the president. Election year politics, which just saw the defeat of the sitting House majority leader in a primary election, make any action soon extremely unlikely.

President Barack Obama is not without responsibility here. Unfortunately, his credibility with Congress is so damaged that he's unable to cobble together any sort of coalition on any issue, never mind on an issue as thorny as immigration.

Yet the president's threats that he will direct immigration policy by executive order aren't just annoying Congress, they're fanning rumors in places like Guatemala and Honduras that a trip to el norte could be a life-changer.

In the flurry of misinformation and misinterpretations, human smuggling rings are adapting. With fewer Mexican nationals attempting illegal crossings, the coyotes are more than happy to adapt their tried and true smuggling channels to new customers.

Meanwhile, with U.S. Border Patrol busy chasing Salvadoran teenagers, drug cartels are ready to slip by. I am not suggesting Border Patrol is too undermanned to stem this latest surge; it's not. The agency has doubled in size the past few years to over 21,000. Today's problems are policy-based.

The president calls the issue of unaccompanied minors apprehended at the border a humanitarian crisis. He's right, it is. But he fails to mention that it's a crisis that he has contributed to as a result of a failure to lead on one of the nation's most pressing challenges.

Interviews conducted with families and children reveal the horrendous conditions many of these victims are subjected to, ranging from simple robberies to sexual assaults. Each person that crosses the border has a story to tell, but few are more heart wrenching than those involving minors.

But when asked, one of the reoccurring reasons given by these kids for crossing the border is to obtain a permiso, a legal form issued to undocumented non-Mexicans caught at the border who are not slated for immediate deportation and who are eligible to be released under their own recognizance.

Don't hold your breath waiting for these Central American kids to make an appearance at their local Immigration and Customs Enforcement office. Most never appear in court and disappear into the U.S.

A U.S. immigration policy that is not clear, consistent, communicated effectively and enforced in both the spirit and letter of the law is reduced to little more than a mere suggestion. What we are witnessing on the border today is a byproduct of our failed immigration policy.

### **The Daily Signal**

09/21/14

### **Charities Taking Care of Unaccompanied Minors Getting Significant Federal Grants**

By Marianela Toledo

MIAMI — Florida nonprofits have taken in more than 3,000 unaccompanied minors from Central America who illegally crossed the southern border, but those organizations are being paid handsomely by taxpayers for doing so.

The Department of Health and Human Services' Tracking Accountability in Government Grants System, or TAGGS, reports Florida nonprofits have received \$21 million thus far in 2014 to care for the children who came in with a wave of illegals earlier this year.

His House Children's Home in Miami, a nonprofit providing residential care for abused, abandoned and neglected children, received about \$10 million, nearly double what it got last year.

Catholics Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami received more than \$4.3 million to care for 300 border children. Millions more went to The Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services Inc. in Pinellas County, Neighbor to Family in Volusia County, Sandy Pines Hospital in Palm Beach County and The Children's Home Inc. in Hillsborough. For many of those groups, it was the first time they received federal grant money.

The Department of Health and Human Services is required by law to care for unaccompanied immigrant children when there is no parent or legal guardian in the United States.

The federal grants are meant to cover costs for temporary housing, medical care and support services.

But details of exactly how the money is being spent haven't been easy to come by.

Several, including Catholic Charities, referred questions to the Department of Justice saying "As determined by ORR's (Office of Refugee and Resettlement) policy, all media requests for any information regarding unaccompanied minors/programs et al in these facilities must be cleared by DOJ," spokeswoman Mary Ross Agosta said in an email.

Others didn't respond.

Most of the money comes from the "Unaccompanied Alien Children Program," a program managed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families and the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

The Office of Management and Budget, said this fiscal year's budget is \$1.4 billion, and next year's is \$2.28 billion.

## **Huffington Post**

09/18/14

### **San Francisco Supervisors Vote To Provide Lawyers For Kids Facing Deportation**

Elise Foley, [elise@huffingtonpost.com](mailto:elise@huffingtonpost.com)

WASHINGTON -- San Francisco is one step closer to providing more than \$2 million for legal representation for undocumented minors and parents who would otherwise face complicated deportation proceedings alone.

The county board of supervisors [voted unanimously](#) on Tuesday to approve about \$2.1 million over the next two years to provide attorneys for unaccompanied minors and adults with children in San Francisco who face deportation after the recent influx of both groups crossing the border illegally this year. The board will vote again on the measure next Tuesday and then send it to San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee (D) for final approval.

The federal government does not provide legal representation for undocumented immigrants, including children, in removal proceedings. But the [need for attorneys](#) for minors and parents is particularly high now, as Border Patrol agents have picked up [more than 66,000](#) unaccompanied minors crossing the

## NEWS REPORTS ON UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS

southern border illegally since the beginning of last October. There was a similar uptick in apprehensions of families, particularly mothers, traveling with their children.

Although the rate at which minors and families were crossing the border illegally has dropped from a high point this summer, the tens of thousands of undocumented immigrants who already crossed are going through removal proceedings and often need counsel to make their case. An estimated [40 percent](#) of unaccompanied minors transferred to Department of Health and Human Services custody are eligible for reprieve from deportation, and research has shown that youth with legal representation [are more likely](#) to be allowed to stay.

The Obama administration requested \$15 million from Congress for legal representation for minors as part of a broader request for funding to address the border crisis, but it was not approved by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. The Justice Department teamed up with AmeriCorps to send about 100 attorneys and paralegals to represent children and teenagers, and last week announced it had awarded \$1.8 million in grants toward the effort. Administration officials have also urged attorneys to provide services pro bono for the minors.

Other states and localities have gotten involved as well. Democratic Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley's administration [asked attorneys](#) to give legal representation, and officials in the state [will announce](#) on Wednesday further efforts to address the crisis. On the state level in California, lawmakers [proposed a bill](#) to fund legal counsel for children and teenagers, and Attorney General Kamala Harris similarly [asked law firms](#) to help. New York City [will post](#) representatives at a federal immigration court to aid unaccompanied minors.

San Francisco's move toward such a high level of funding, though, is notable. The city has a history of pro-immigrant stances, such as [pushing back against](#) federal government programs that asked police to hold undocumented immigrants for Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

About 2,100 minors and family units [are expected](#) to go without a lawyer at the San Francisco Immigration Court this year, according to an analyst's report for the board of supervisors. The report estimated it would cost about \$6.2 million to provide lawyers in every case. Providing attorneys only for undocumented minors currently living in the city would cost about \$1.2 million. The current proposal would provide about \$1 million per year, for two years, for legal representation.

Supervisor David Campos, who authored the measure and came to the U.S. without authorization at 14, said the move was inspired in part by testimony from children and teenagers who fled violence in their native countries.

"These young people's courage moved many of my colleagues and I to tears," he said in a statement on Tuesday. "I hope that together, we will inspire other local governments to take compassionate action -- and that President Obama will stop these rapid-fire deportation proceedings which are putting these young people at risk."

**MSNBC**

09/18/14

**As border crisis fades, communities step up**

By Amanda Sakuma

Far less flashy than the images of mobs ascending on busloads of immigrant children, communities across the country continue to react to the thousands of unaccompanied minors entering the U.S. – by lending a helping hand.

Pro-bono attorney organizations are maxing out caseloads taking on the thousands of children so they won't have to face immigration judges alone and without representation, as many often do. Religious charities taking in donations are handing out heaps of food and clothes. Immigrant rights groups are aiding federal agencies in reuniting children with their families and sponsors settled in the U.S.

While politically, the influx of Central American children caught along the southwestern border in the last few years has been a lightning rod over how the government should respond to the crisis, community groups and organizations have stepped in to fill the void. States and municipalities meanwhile have become liaisons in the process, linking children and their families with the organizations clamoring to offer help and reshuffling existing resources as Congress dithers on federal funding.

The scorched public backlash associated with housing the children, many of whom were fleeing extreme violence in Central America, raised the concern with officials in some areas that sheltering the children would drain local resources.

But Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, a potential presidential contender for Democrats, has made embracing the unaccompanied minors a focus of his administration. When graffiti scrawled on the side of a facility proposed to be converted into a temporary shelter for the migrant kids warned "No illegals here. No undocumented Democrats," the governor was forced to very publicly walk back and re-calibrate how far Maryland was able to go in helping the kids.

Since the summer, O'Malley has instead solicited volunteers from the community and legal organizations to step in. After hearing residents and community members wanted to help but didn't know how to connect with the nearly 3,000 migrant kids who have settled in Maryland since the start of the year, tech

groups volunteered to build the state a website matching up more than 1,300 local organizations that provide anything from social services to medical care for the unaccompanied minors. The state on Wednesday unveiled the new website and additional resources in response to what officials called an outpouring of support from residents and organizations eager to assist the children.

“There were a lot of people who wanted to help, but there wasn’t a simple way for people to meet,” said Secretary Ted Dallas of Maryland Department of Human Resources. “In Maryland, it’s been very much about people volunteering and wanting to help. It’s been very heartening.”

Officials in San Francisco are taking it a step further after the city’s Board of Supervisors this week passed an ordinance to allocate more than \$2.1 million over the next two years in legal services for the children as they make their way through the immigration courts. Advocate groups have raised concerns that many of the migrant kids coming from Central America potentially qualify for humanitarian aid, even asylum in the United States, claims that could be boosted with greater access to legal aid.

Though the Department of Health and Human Services provides shelters and tends to the children’s basic needs after they are apprehended along the border, once migrant kids become reunited with their families, those resources stop abruptly. Service providers have found it difficult to reach the children once they’re released into their communities, where some families may not know that every child is allowed enroll in public schools and have access to greater resources.

Over in New York City, officials announced Tuesday that agency representatives are taking posts outside of courtrooms where children are required to appear before an immigration judge. While traditionally schools have been an opportune place to reach kids and gauge the services they need, city officials say the daily juvenile dockets in New York courts allow representatives from city agencies a chance to catch up with kids and do anything from help enroll them in school, sign up for health insurance or find counseling.

Those resources are there and available – providers just need to find the kids who need them.

“Our sense was that it’s not like we need to do anything new here,” said Nisha Agarwal, commissioner of Immigrant Affairs. “What’s critical ... is to connect them to the services that already exist.

**Business Wire**

09/17/14

**Fragomen Launches Nationwide Pro Bono Initiative in Response to Unaccompanied Immigrant Children Crisis**

NEW YORK & WASHINGTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Fragomen, the world's leading firm exclusively devoted to counseling corporate clients on global immigration law, is partnering with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) on a major pro bono initiative to represent unaccompanied children in immigration proceedings in the United States. The program was initiated in response to the unprecedented crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border, where tens of thousands of children have arrived after fleeing abuse and violence in Central America.

In addition to supporting KIND, Fragomen will also work with trusted local non-profits such as The Safe Passage Project in New York City, the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project in Phoenix and the Casa Cornelia Law Center in San Diego.

"Fragomen has a long-standing commitment to pro bono work, and our attorneys have had many notable successes over the years in providing critical legal assistance to people in need," said Austin Fragomen, partner and chairman of the firm's Executive Committee. "Data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Vera Institute of Justice indicate that 40 to 60 percent of unaccompanied immigrant children may be eligible for asylum or other relief. The numbers may actually be higher. But because there is no right to court-appointed counsel in immigration court, we think it is our duty as the country's largest immigration law firm to step in and provide representation to as many of these children as we can."

"Fragomen recognizes the vital importance of representation for these children and the reality that without an attorney, many will be returned to grave harm, and even death," said KIND President Wendy Young. "Fragomen's willingness to make a significant commitment to helping unaccompanied children is a testament to the firm's compassion and dedication to the most vulnerable. We are grateful for and applaud their efforts."

In addition to taking on individual cases of unaccompanied immigrant children, Fragomen attorneys are also volunteering at juvenile dockets in immigration court, where they screen children for potential eligibility for relief from deportation and for referral to pro bono attorneys or non-profit legal services organizations. Senior attorneys are mentoring junior lawyers, and Fragomen offices around the country

are staffing pro bono legal clinics and hosting training sessions and educational forums for pro bono attorneys on representing children in immigration matters.

“The importance of legal representation cannot be overstated,” said Careen Shannon, counsel in Fragomen’s New York office and the firm’s point person on the campaign. “Immigrants who are represented by counsel are overwhelmingly more likely to prevail in removal proceedings than are those without counsel.”

### **About Fragomen**

Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, LLP and Fragomen Global LLP (collectively known as Fragomen) is the world’s largest firm practicing exclusively in the area of global immigration law for the corporate sector. Fragomen provides immigration services worldwide to multinational corporations, emerging companies, universities and many other organizations that employ foreign nationals on a temporary or permanent basis. Founded in 1951, Fragomen has more than 2,000 immigration professionals located in more than 40 offices and 18 countries. Internationally, the Firm provides clients with advice on immigration policy, compliance and program management, and prepares applications for visas, work permits, and resident permits. For detailed information about Fragomen's practice, please visit [www.fragomen.com](http://www.fragomen.com).

### **About KIND**

KIND was founded by Angelina Jolie and the Microsoft Corporation to ensure that no immigrant or refugee child has to appear in immigration court alone. Through partnerships with more than 220 law firm, corporate, and law school partners, KIND matches unaccompanied children with pro bono attorneys who represent the children throughout their proceedings. KIND trains and mentors its volunteer attorneys; KIND has created a pool of more than 8,000 volunteer attorneys across the country in the eight cities in which we work: Baltimore, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, Newark, New York City, Seattle and Washington, D.C., and has been referred more than 6,400 children. We achieve fundamental fairness through high-quality legal representation and by advancing the child's best interests, safety, and well-being. [www.supportkind.org](http://www.supportkind.org)

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**ABC News**

09/16/14

**White House: Unaccompanied Minor Crisis All But Over**

By Jim Avila @JimAvilaABC, Serena Marshall @SerenaMarsh

The Obama administration isn't claiming "mission accomplished" but it may be as close as the White House can get.

The Border Patrol announced today that the unaccompanied minors crisis has all but ended, as the rise in children crossing the Southwest border has stopped.

"It's premature to say it's over but significant progress [has been] made" in stopping unaccompanied minors, Department of Homeland Security Deputy Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said today at the National Press Club.

"It is now five months later, and the number of children arriving and apprehended at our border is dramatically lower than it was five months ago," Mayorkas said, citing factors both in officials' control and outside factors.

"Historically, for example, the month of August sees a precipitous drop in the number of migrants reaching the Southwest border by virtue of the season and time of year, by the heat and the like," he said. "That very well may play a factor in what we've seen."

Between Oct. 1 and the end of August, the Southwest border saw more than 66,000 children apprehended, mostly coming from Central American countries. That represented an 88 percent increase over the same period a year earlier.

More than 10,000 children were apprehended in both May and June, while July saw just more than 5,500, and August around 3,100.

"It would be premature, at best, to declare victory and to say that the problem is behind us. Because we don't know," Mayorkas said. "What we have achieved is tremendous progress and if, indeed, we begin to observe an uptick in the number of unaccompanied children ... we are prepared to address that uptick very swiftly."

The White House began making its case for executive action on immigration reform Monday night by circulating a blog written by the commissioner of the Border Patrol – Gil Kerlikoski.

President Obama has admitted he lost public support for unilateral reform when thousands of unaccompanied minors and mothers with children began crossing the border in never-before-seen numbers this spring.

In advance of promised presidential action in November, the Border Patrol announced that the Mexican frontier is “more secure that it has been in decades,” and that “decisive action” has brought the influx of Central American children under control.

For the second month in a row – August, following July – the number of unaccompanied minors has declined.

“Victory is accomplished when those cities and towns that suffer violence and suffer the vicissitude of life no longer do, such that children do not have to flee seeking relief and refuge elsewhere,” Mayorkas said. “That, I think, would be victory. And that is something that involves much more than what we are speaking about this morning.”

During the news conference, Mayorkas also addressed concern that the terrorist group ISIS has been planning to enter the United States through the Southwest border.

“There is no credible information that there is an active plot to traverse the Southwest border now,” Mayorkas said. “That being said, we, as a Department of Homeland Security, have the obligation to be, and are very much, vigilant in terms of our nation’s security – whether that be by land, by sea or by air.”

## **New York Post**

09/16/14

### **Kids facing deportation to get extra help from NYC**

The city is rolling out the red carpet to undocumented children who have come to the United States without an adult or immigration papers.

Mayor de Blasio announced Tuesday that he is dispatching health and school workers to immigration court to help children facing deportation — the first time the city has provided such direct services.

“These children have come here because they have families or sponsors in New York City, and it is our responsibility to assist them,” he said.

Under his plan, the Department of Education would help kids sign up for English language classes and enroll in school, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene would enroll them in a state-funded health insurance, and the Health and Hospital Corp. would offer medical and mental-health treatment.

Advocacy groups testifying Tuesday at an Assembly hearing on the influx of immigrant children from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala said they're buckling under a flood of cases.

In many cases, the children are fleeing threats of violence in their home countries.

"What these children need are lawyers," testified Eve Stotland, director of legal services at The Door, which provides outreach to at-risk city kids, including immigrants. "The legal services community is at capacity . . . We are tapped out."

Finding pro-bono lawyers is also tough because immigration cases involving unaccompanied minors are complex and can drag on for up to two years, according to lawyer Lenni Benson, director of the Safe Passage Project.

State funding for more court officers and an attorney hot line for immigrants would help, she testified.

Monsignor Kevin Sullivan suggested the state lay out \$24 million for caseworkers to follow up with kids once they've left immigration detention centers.

Additional city services being offered in the federal courts come at no extra cost, de Blasio's Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs Nisha Agarwal said.

"This is staff that's already doing school enrollment. It's staff that's already doing [health insurance] enrollment," she said, adding that two to four city employees would be working at the courthouse on a daily basis, depending on the day's docket load.

The rollout comes as the city is being inundated by unaccompanied immigrant children, most of whom don't know the language or how to navigate a complicated maze of immigration and family courts.

At least 1,350 have landed with a family member or other sponsors in the city since January, according to the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement. As of July, 587 of those children have settled in Queens, 362 have gone to Brooklyn, 347 to The Bronx and 54 to Manhattan.

About 4,244 children have arrived statewide, making New York second only to Texas in the number of recent unaccompanied arrivals.

**Associated Press**

09/16/14

**Bid withdrawn for large West Texas shelter**

CLINT, TX -- A New York-based company has withdrawn its bid to build a shelter in West Texas that would have been the largest in the U.S. to hold unaccompanied children who enter the country illegally.

Charles McGuire, CEO of Watford Ranch, says federal officials told him there's no longer a need for the shelter southeast of El Paso so he's withdrawn a state application.

He had sought to build a 3,500-bed permanent facility, one that would have been far larger than other shelters. A temporary processing facility in McAllen holds about 1,000 children.

The Houston Chronicle reports there are 43 shelters in Texas with a capacity of more than 3,700.

Federal officials say more than 57,000 unaccompanied children have entered the U.S. since October but the surge has since subsided.

**New Orleans City Business**

09/16/14

**Immigration attorney looks for help representing children**

By: Maria Clark, Reporter

Over the past year, approximately 65,000 immigrant children have crossed the U.S. border to escape gang and drug-related violence in their home countries in Central America. More than 1,000 have been placed with relatives in Louisiana as they wait for the court system to determine their future in the United States.

The large influx of cases has created what immigration attorney Kathleen Gasparian describes as a "supply and demand problem." Two months ago, she and her colleagues at Ware Gasparian created the Pro Bono Juvenile Project (PB&J) to find qualified interpreters and attorneys willing to take on these cases. The project has grown to a network of more than 120 volunteers, including 60 attorneys, interpreters, government workers and judges.

**How did you become interested in immigration law?**

I graduated from Loyola University with an English degree and wanted to teach high school students. I was not very good at it, however, so I took a job at Loyola in the international student affairs office, helping international students get their visas to study here. My mentor with the program, Debbie Danna, inspired me to go to law school from there and become an immigration lawyer.

I also grew up overseas. We were stationed in Korea and did our tours of Asia. My grandfather also came to the U.S. as an unaccompanied minor from Armenia. His experience was always part of our dialogue.

We have an amazing system here, with due process, justice, freedom of speech. We don't just throw people away from here. I realized I wanted to help others find their place here.

**How is the current crisis shaping the dialogue on illegal immigration?**

When you see pictures of children in detention centers, it makes it more of a humanitarian issue and harder to dismiss as "not my problem." It's harder to make this issue about a group of people and easier to see them as individuals. Hopefully, this will change the dialogue.

It is important to distinguish between these children and the ongoing conversation about undocumented people. These children are being placed with family who are already here, and many of whom are here lawfully.

Immigration is also a big economic and business issue as well. We have a robust number of immigrant-owned businesses that are employing Americans and driving our economy. A working immigration system that allows people to live here lawfully and get paid over the table will also help drive up wages in general.

**What challenges do you foresee once these cases make it to court?**

There has been a lot of press about the immigration court backlogs and the idea of how much impact these kids will have on these courts. The backlog existed well before the rise in the number of children arriving. The rise in this number brings to light and makes public some of the inherent problems with immigration proceedings.

Unlike criminal proceedings, you don't get protections like a court-appointed attorney. There are no special caveats, and DHS (Department of Homeland Security) can choose to continue to prosecute whether or not the individual obtains representation. These are children, however, and we can't be putting them through a complex system without proper counsel.

We (PB&J) are self-funded and will be setting up a fund in order to make sure our attorneys will have the funds to help pay for any associated court fees as these cases proceed.

**How does the situation in New Orleans compare with other cities with larger immigrant populations?**

I was talking to a practitioner in Boston, who said that the immigration court in Boston is seeing 30 of these types of cases in a month. Up until recently, I would venture to say we didn't see that many in a year.

By comparison, we have a very small immigration bar in New Orleans. It's going to be a learning process not just for attorneys, but for state court judges as well. It's an interesting look at the idea of supply and demand. All of a sudden there is a huge demand but no supply. We hope to be able to provide training in this one segment of immigration law to create more of a balance.

**The Epoch Times**

09/16/14

**In Midst of Deportation Trials, Migrant Children Offered Schooling and Healthcare**

By Shannon Liao

NEW YORK—Paola Flores loves her 13-year-old daughter, Yennifer, so much that she asked her to jump the border from Honduras to New York—arranging for a smuggler to bring her to New York.

“We had to send for our children, they were suffering over there,” Flores, 35, said of her and other parents like her.

She was arrested in 2004 for crossing the border but managed to avoid deportation by skipping her court appearances.

It is not uncommon for Central American parents to leave their young children behind with other family in order to come to work in the United States—sending a large cut of their salaries home to provide for their children.

**TIME**

09/16/14

**Deputy Homeland Security Secretary: Border ‘More Secure’ Than Ever**

Maya Rhodan @m\_rhodan

Alejandro Mayorkas spoke Tuesday at an event hosted by the liberal think tank NDN. The U.S. border is “more secure than it has ever been before,” Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said Tuesday while speaking on the federal government’s response to the surge in minors crossing the country’s southern border unaccompanied.

Mayorkas, addressing a crowd at the National Press Club in Washington, said that though the number of children crossing the U.S.-Mexico border has decreased from the 300-per-day that were seen at the peak of the ongoing crisis, he would not declare the problem itself solved.

“It would be premature at best to declare a victory and say the past is behind us because we don’t know,” Mayorkas said. “What we have achieved is tremendous progress.”

More than 66,000 kids have crossed the southern U.S. border without their parents or guardians between October 2013 and the end of August, most starting from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala and making the final leg over the U.S. border in the Rio Grande Valley area. However, the number of youths making the trip has decreased dramatically in the late summer from the peak in May and June — in August, unaccompanied minor border crossings were at their lowest point since February 2013, with just over 3,100 kids apprehended that month.

Mayorkas credited that decline to various steps the U.S. government has taken to address the crisis, including expediting the processing of children apprehended at the border and working with the governments of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala to keep kids from coming in the first place.

The issues at the border, however, are likely far from over. There have been allegations of abuse and substandard living conditions at some immigration detention centers, for example. And though the administration set aside \$2 million to provide legal representation for immigrant minors, advocates say many of them still lack counsel. Immigrants do not have a legal right to a lawyer, but advocates say legal representation would help ease the strain on the courts which the influx of minors creates. And though the number of children crossing the border dropped in the hot summer months, there is a possibility for an uptick in crossings as temperatures cool down.

## Florida Watchdog

09/16/14

### Border kids a boon for charities receiving federal grants

By Marianela Toledo

MIAMI — Florida nonprofits have taken in more than 3,000 unaccompanied minors from Central America who illegally crossed the southern border, but those organizations are being paid handsomely by taxpayers for their charity.

The Department of Health and Human Services' Tracking Accountability in Government Grants System, or TAGGS, reports Florida nonprofits have received \$21 million thus far in 2014 to care for the children who came with a wave of illegals earlier this year.

His House Children's Home in Miami, a nonprofit providing residential care for abused, abandoned and neglected children, received the lion's share of that cash, about \$10 million, nearly double what they got last year.

Catholics Charities of the Archdiocese of Miami received more than \$4.3 million to care for 300 border children. Millions more went to The Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services Inc. in Pinellas County, Neighbor to Family in Volusia County, Sandy Pines Hospital in Palm Beach County and The Children's Home Inc. in Hillsborough. For many of those groups, it was the first time they received federal grant money.

The Department of Health and Human Services is required by law to care for unaccompanied immigrant children when there is no parent or legal guardian in the United States.

The federal grants are meant to cover costs for temporary housing, medical care and support services.

But details of exactly how the money is being spent haven't been easy to come by. So Florida Watchdog contacted all of the charities to find out first hand.

Several, including Catholic Charities, referred questions to the Department of Justice saying "As determined by ORR's (Office of Refugee and Resettlement) policy, all media requests for any

information regarding unaccompanied minors/programs et al in these facilities must be cleared by DOJ,” spokeswoman Mary Ross Agosta said in an email.

Others didn’t bother to respond.

Asked The Children’s Home Inc. spends its grant money, Kenneth Wolfe, communications director at for Children and Families U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said:

“The Children’s Home is a grantee under our Unaccompanied Alien Children program. For Tampa, it has been funded for two shelters — one with up to 11 children and another with up to 16.”

Most of the money comes from the “Unaccompanied Alien Children Program,” a program managed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families and the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

The Office of Management and Budget, said this fiscal year’s budget is \$1.4 billion, and next year’s is \$2.28 billion.

The projected increase is calculated by taking into account the 51,000 unaccompanied minors already in the U.S., plus 40,000 more who are expected to arrive by the end of the year. Most of the children are coming from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

In 2002, HHS took over the care and custody of unaccompanied children from the Immigration and Naturalization Service in an effort to move to a child welfare-based model and away from adult detention.

But a 2008 report issued by the inspector general at HHS showed the program wasn’t doing much to oversee compliance at the child-care facilities.

“Federal field specialist and field coordinator visits to facilities do not include routine meetings with children. Additionally, (the Division of Unaccompanied Children’s Services) does not have a method to track children after they are released to sponsors and therefore is unable to determine whether the processes facilities use to screen sponsors are effective and whether sponsors continue to provide for children’s physical, mental, and financial well-being,” says the report.

HHS’s inspector general said the 2008 audit has not been updated.

Other audit reports checked by Florida Watchdog did not say whether the agency increased accountability on the program.

So far, one case of misuse was reported in Florida. Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services in Pasco County was forced to repay \$167,762 for its misuse of federal funds, according to the Tampa Tribune.

But despite the lack of formal oversight procedures, some lawmakers are starting to question the numbers.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, demanded accountability after a Texas television station reported that a nonprofit received \$50 million to turn a luxury hotel into a center for unaccompanied minors at a cost to taxpayers of more \$166,000 per bed, or \$13,889 per month per child.

## **The Herald Sun**

09/16/14

### **Editorial: Embracing immigrant children**

For the past few months, we've seen dispiriting scenes across the country as the arrival of unattended immigrant children sparked anger and xenophobia.

While we don't agree with those who would summarily send the children back to the crime-ridden and dangerous neighborhoods they were fleeing, we could at least understand some of the dismay near the U.S.-Mexican border where the influx has resulted in overflowing detention facilities.

But the "don't-let-them-in" mood has spread far beyond borders and Immigration and Naturalization Service encampments. CNN reported in July that Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad – whose state capital lies some 1,100 miles from the Mexican border – said that he does not want federal officials to send Central American children to his state. By accepting them, he told the network, the United States is sending "a signal to send kids illegally."

Durham, we are often pleased to note, is a diverse and compassionate city.

So it is not surprising – but assuredly heartening – that Durham Public Schools is not just reacting calmly to an influx of "border children" but is proactively putting in place methods and measures to embrace them.

School officials briefed the Durham County Commissioners on their efforts Monday, and also reached out to commissioners who likewise were receptive to dealing with the issue.

The school system estimates nearly 300 children who have fled El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have enrolled since January. That's an educated guess, because the system cannot ask whether the students are illegal immigrants.

The schools expect another 200 or more by the end of the school year. To put that in perspective, around 500 newcomers would be the equivalent of the enrollment at Club Boulevard Elementary or Shepherd Middle School.

Many immigrant children have limited English skills and have had their education interrupted. Schools are adding teachers to support children who arrive with low-literacy skills and mobilizing social workers and counselors. Board Chairwoman Heidi Carter told the commissioners the county might be able to help recruit bilingual social workers, something the schools now lack.

Commissioner Chairman Michael Page correctly noted that more than just the schools need to be involved. "This is a community issue," he said Monday. "Education is a critical component ... but I think there's going to be other areas that we're going to focus on."

We're confident that this community will rise to the challenge, and will react in the spirit of Kathleen McQuillen, Iowa program director of the American Friends Service Committee. CNN reported her retort to Gov. Branstad's position: "My God. This is a humanitarian crisis...It's a simple thing to begin to say, what's important in this world?"

DPS officials clearly and commendably know the answer.

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## **CBS Local New York**

09/16/14

### **Officials Hold Hearing On Immigrant Children In New York City**

VIDEO: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2014/09/16/officials-hold-hearing-on-immigrant-children-in-new-york-city/>

**NEW YORK (CBSNewYork/AP)** — State officials held a public hearing Tuesday on what to do with thousands of migrant children who have fled violence and poverty in Central America.

State Assembly members heard from witnesses including the consul general of El Salvador in Manhattan and organizations that provide shelter, along with legal, medical and social services.

As 1010 WINS' Sonia Rincon reported, the immigration crisis has brought several thousand undocumented and unaccompanied Central American children into federal immigration court in Manhattan.

The city's commissioner for immigration affairs, Nisha Agarwal, said the city is trying to connect the children with resources.

"As of last week, New York City has for the first time placed government representatives at the federal immigration court to provide services directly to the children," she said.

Agarwal told Rincon most children end up with family members — about half on Long Island or in Yonkers, and they're likely here to stay.

That's why Lenny Benson, with New York Law School, said he told the Assembly panel the children need help navigating the legal system — especially in the suburbs — and integrating into local schools.

"The majority of children, when we say 'why are you coming to the United States,' after they say safety, they light up and say school," she said.

At the hearing, Jennifer Freedman, of the Pace Public Interest Law Center, told the Assembly panel the children need more access to legal help and mental health services.

She described one teenage boy's story of a dangerous journey over slippery rocks in the rain.

“The group he was with abandoned a teenage girl who slipped and injured her leg and was in too much pain to walk,” she said. “He is plagued by thoughts of what might have happened to that girl.”

Jeremy Kohomban heads the Children’s Village, which has sheltered about 1,500 of the children in Harlem and in Westchester.

He testified that despite their horrific experiences, “They’re optimistic, grateful to the United States and capable of integrating safely into our communities.”

Across the country, immigration officials say about 90,000 youths could face detention and deportation. An estimated 3,000 are in New York state and as many as 7,000 more are expected this year.

New York City has formed a task force to tackle what City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito called “a humanitarian crisis.”

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## **NBC News**

09/15/14

### **Minors Fleeing Central America Face Shaky Transition to U.S. Schools**

By Nona Willis Aronowitz

AKE WORTH, Florida — In the late afternoon at the multi-colored Guatemalan-Maya Center, teens and kids as young as six were huddled in makeshift classrooms with teachers and high school volunteers. Days of the week and months of the year filled the dry erase boards. The written words were in English, but the children were speaking a jumble of languages: Spanish, a smattering of English, and indigenous Mayan languages like Q’anjob’al, Kachiquel, or Mam—the only ones some of these children are fluent in.

The center, a nonprofit serving immigrants from Guatemala, has been open since the 1980s, when brutal civil war drove many Guatemalan citizens to the United States. Up until a few months ago, the afterschool language program, Escuelita Maya, was frequented by only a handful of elementary school kids. But recently, the program’s enrollment has exploded along with the surge of unaccompanied minors crossing the border, and Escuelita Maya now serves dozens of teens. When the Palm Beach County school district realized they were enrolling at least one of these Central American minors every day, the district’s multicultural department directed their new students to the afterschool program for help with English.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection estimates that since October 2013, 66,000 children and teenagers have crossed the U.S. border without their parents, most of them from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. They’re escaping gangs, street violence, and extreme poverty in their countries and usually coming to meet family members who live here. More than 3,000 children have been dispatched to relatives in Florida. A few weeks ago, many of them entered their first American classroom.

But for the kids learning vocabulary at the center today, the transition has been far from seamless. Some have never been to school or haven't attended for years. Some aren't literate in English or Spanish, and only speak Mayan languages, mostly Q'anjob'al.

"[The kids] come here and they're thrown into these massive high schools," said Jill Skok, community outreach director at the Guatemalan-Maya Center. "They're happy to be there," but it's hard for them to do work when "they don't even know the definition of the questions." Most of their families don't know English, either.

Hugo, who is polite and shy and looks far younger than his 15 years, is one of these students. He was held in a Texas detention center for three weeks after he crossed the border in May with his older brother. He grew up with his grandparents in a tiny town in Guatemala, speaking only Q'anjob'al. School was too expensive and his family needed him to work, so Hugo traded in pencils for tree farms and corn fields when he was six years old. His mother had been in the United States since he was three, and he "was waiting for the day I could go to school," he said in broken Spanish.

Hugo recently entered high school in Lake Worth, where only one out of seven of his teachers speaks Spanish. School has been "a little hard" because "I don't understand a lot of things...Some ladies at school help me in Spanish, but it confuses me at times." None of the teachers speak his native language.

"We help [the kids] here," said Skok—many of the center's teachers and volunteers speak Q'anjob'al—"but sometimes they get frustrated and just want the answer."

Other kids have had better luck; they went to school in their home countries and grew up speaking Spanish. But they're still dealing with the fallout from their harrowing border-crossing experience, a trauma that sometimes clouds their ability to focus. Diego, 15, got sent back to Guatemala twice before he finally reached his father in Lake Worth in June.

"I was traveling forever, for 25 days in total," he said. "I think about it always."

Despite language and education barriers, South Florida school districts are better equipped than most to handle this influx of unaccompanied minors, given their large immigrant populations. Palm Beach County, which includes Lake Worth, has one of the biggest Guatemalan communities in the country. The Miami school district, which got approved for additional federal funds to accommodate a recent surge of mostly Honduran minors, has been dealing with these sorts of students for decades.

"It's absolutely true that some of these children are arriving illiterate in English and Spanish, and that poses a challenge," said Alberto Carvalho, superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. "But it's not a challenge that we haven't dealt with before. We're lucky to have a very diverse teaching population who is also linguistically proficient in a number of languages."

But some school districts have neither bilingual teachers nor organizations like the Guatemalan-Maya Center. Rachel Diaz, an immigration attorney at the Mennonite Central Committee, recently worked with a 17-year-old boy who'd never been to school until he came to Everglades City, Florida, around two hours west of Miami. The small city has one K-12 school without an ESL program. Only one staff member, a social studies teacher, speaks Spanish.

“That teacher essentially wrote a letter saying, ‘Nice kid, but we don’t have what he needs,’” said Diaz. “He’s here to survive and work, and he doesn’t want to go back. But what do you do? Do you put him in kindergarten? How comfortable would parents be to have a 17-year-old sitting with their six-year-old?”

Diaz said the teen is determined to learn English and become a teacher, but she worries about the domino effect a rejection like this can have. When this 17-year-old tells another unaccompanied minor what happened, “that child may not even bother” enrolling, Diaz said. “For someone who is illiterate, even the paperwork to get in school can be too much.”

Carvalho said Miami-Dade has employed “aggressive outreach” to direct services centers and youth groups to ensure these kids know they have “a right to a free, public education.” But these minors, particularly older teenagers who aren’t legally required to attend school, may face pressure from their families to start working right away; Skok said the center has “lost a few kids” for this reason.

Guardians also may not know the procedure for entry or avoid school officials for fear of being deported. Alex, 15, arrived here earlier this summer, and left school in Guatemala when he was 12. His mother hasn’t yet enrolled him in school because her neighbor told her he needed identification. (This isn’t true; all children can attend school regardless of immigration status.) During a recent consultation at American Friend’s Service Committee in Miami, which provides immigrants free legal services, the mother wondered aloud whether she’d have to pay to enroll her son in school.

Alex said he left school in Guatemala because he wasn’t learning anything, and there were lots of fights and bullying. But he’s excited to go to high school in Miami. “I want to learn English,” he said.

The prospect of free education void of violence or fear is a major reason many of the minors have fled Central America to meet their families. So even though the kids have gone through a trauma most United States citizens will never face, Skok and others say they’re elated to be in the classroom.

During afterschool one day, Skok pulled out a mental health survey that a Catholic Charities psychologist had provided for the center. The teachers helped students fill them out a few days earlier so they could track their progress; the kids rated their mental state from 1 to 10 in a handful of categories. Hugo’s “individual” mind state rated a .5; he missed his sick grandmother, he later explained.

“School,” however, earned a 10.

“They’re excited to learn, so [the challenges of] school don’t phase them,” Skok said. “What they worry about most is being deported. They don’t want to have to leave.”

*Education coverage for NBCNews.com is supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. NBC News retains sole editorial control over the content of this coverage.*

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**Fox News Latino**

09/15/14

## **Lessons From The Border: School Bells Ring For Kids Held At Immigration Detention Centers**

KARNES CITY, Texas (AP) – In one classroom monitored by security cameras, third- and fourth-graders read in Spanish from a short story about mice. In another, an algebra teacher reminds high school students to always fully distribute both sides of an equation before solving it.

On an artificial turf soccer field in the courtyard, sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders are in the midst of a raucous kickball game — ignoring the high walls and surrounding 15-foot gate.

For about 200 immigrant children who fled to the United States with their mothers mostly from Central America it is another school day, except that they are housed in a federal immigration prison and all the residents risk being deported.

School is eight hours a day inside the federal immigration lockup at Karnes County Residential Center. The curriculum for pre-kindergarten to 12th grade is the same as bilingual schools across the state. Days begin with the reciting of the pledges of allegiance in English to the Texas and American flags.

Amid a surge of families and unaccompanied minors pouring across the U.S.-Mexico border, authorities converted what had been the all-male Karnes facility about 50 miles southeast of San Antonio to one with capacity for 532 women and children. They then teamed up a nearby charter school district to begin offering classes.

The Associated Press recently was allowed a tour, though U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) didn't permit speaking with students or teachers, or on-the-record interviews with school administrators.

At Karnes detainees are allowed to move around the grounds, enjoying free Internet access, flat-screen TVs and a hair salon. Instead of guards, prison personnel are "resident advisers."

To prepare for families, the facility purchased three shelves of bilingual children's books for the library and painted cartoon murals, including an octopus with a platter in its tentacles in the all-you-can-eat cafeteria.

Still, some youngsters remain traumatized from the treacherous journey hundreds of miles north. School officials said that learning under such circumstances is difficult — but they say school can help children socialize and acclimate.

"Whether they stay here in the United States or go back to their home countries, they're here now and they're learning," said Enrique Lucero, who directs ICE's enforcement and removal operations in the region. "And that's valuable for their lives."

The Karnes facility is one of three nationwide housing immigrant parents and their children. The others are Leesport, Pennsylvania, and Artesia, New Mexico. The Leesport center offers schooling, while Artesia plans to begin classes in a few weeks.

One family in detention at Karnes is from Brazil and a few are from Mexico, but all others are from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, where immigrants are fleeing street gangs and drug smugglers or extreme poverty. Many have sought asylum in the U.S.

Thousands of other children detained without their parents — comprising the bulk of the immigration influx — are processed differently. Many of those unaccompanied minors have already been released to live with relatives in the U.S. and have matriculated into ordinary public schools as their cases progress.

At Karnes, nine multipurpose rooms have been converted into classrooms, many adorned with patriotic posters of bald eagles and instructional pictures of different denominations of U.S. currency.

Upon arrival, children go through an assessment process and are placed in school based on academic ability — though officials say their grade level back home is often comparable to where they're assigned at the facility.

During AP's visit, 8 and 9-year-olds at round tables originally designed to play checkers read aloud from "El Mensaje del Ratón," or the "Mouse's Secret."

Nearby, 11th- and 12th-graders worked collectively in Spanish on an algebra problem written on a white board. The answer they came up was  $6X+13x2$ . "Are you sure?" their teacher asked with a grin. "Si!" came the reply. But the class had forgotten a key set of parenthesis. The correct answer was  $6X+6x2$ .

"Some of them may have missed a lot of school because of having fled, because of dangers. It's just not an easy endeavor." Said Michelle Brane, migrant rights director at the New York-based Women's Refugee Commission.

Brane pointed to an immigration facility outside Austin that once housed families but stopped in 2009 amid allegations of human rights abuses. There, students received just one hour of schooling per day.

"I have no doubt this will be better," Brane said of Karnes, which her organization is set to visit this week. "But just because it looks pretty decent on the surface, doesn't mean there won't be challenges."

Lucero said the children will remain at the Karnes facility until they are deported, or released on bond and allowed to live elsewhere in the U.S. with family or a sponsor pending upcoming immigration court dates.

In the meantime, they're days also feature physical education classes, such as the one that sparked the kickball game. It pitted a team called the Yankees against one known as the Eagles.

But when the Eagles won, the celebration involved the team's moniker in Spanish. "Aguilas!" its members whooped. "Aguilas!"

**Associated Press**

**09/12/14**

**Holder says immigrant kids should get lawyers, but his department disagrees**

BY Erica Werner

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Eric Holder is arguing publicly in favor of legal representation for migrant children arriving unaccompanied at the border — even as his department takes the opposite position in court.

Holder said Friday in a speech to the Hispanic National Bar Association that, “Though these children may not have a constitutional right to a lawyer, we have policy reasons and a moral obligation to insure the presence of counsel.”

Yet last week, Deputy Assistant Attorney General Leon Fresco appeared before a federal judge in Seattle to argue that providing legal representation for immigrant children facing deportation could create open borders and send the message that no one here illegally would be removed.

“It would create a magnet effect,” Fresco said in court.

That argument before U.S. District Judge Thomas S. Zilly came in a lawsuit brought by a coalition of immigrant advocates on behalf of a group of migrant children. A ruling is pending.

The contradiction emerges between what the administration argues the children are constitutionally entitled to, and what Holder says he supports as a policy. On Friday he discussed a new \$1.8 million program to help legal aid organizations represent migrant children in courts, and said the department is working “to facilitate access to legal representation for these children.”

Immigration advocates say the administration can’t have it both ways.

“They can try to distinguish between their legal and moral obligation, but if you’re saying there’s a moral obligation to the children, you’re recognizing that in order for them to have a fair hearing, they need an attorney,” said Matt Adams, legal director at the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, a plaintiff in the lawsuit in Seattle.

In a statement, Justice Department spokeswoman Nicole Navas tried to explain the contradiction.

“There is no question that, as a policy matter, the department would like children in immigration proceedings to have counsel. But the issue in the pending litigation is quite different and involves only whether there is a constitutional right to government-funded counsel,” she said. “While there is no constitutional right to counsel for immigrants in removal proceedings at government expense, the administration is still urging Congress to fund these attorney positions as a matter of discretion.”

More than 60,000 children and youth have arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border in the last year without their parents, many fleeing vicious gangs in Central America. Although the arrivals at the border have dropped sharply, the vast majority of those admitted to the U.S. remain, their cases moving slowly through badly backlogged immigration courts.

Under the law, migrant children who arrive from Central America are guaranteed court hearings. But unlike defendants in criminal court proceedings, immigrants facing deportation proceedings are not entitled to counsel.

Advocates bringing the case in Seattle argue that for children who are fleeing brutal circumstances and might have asylum claims, the Constitution's due-process guarantee requires that they should be represented.

The government disagrees, arguing that the children already have legal protections, and that an injunction declaring they should all have legal representation would result in all their removal proceedings being stopped and draw many more children to the U.S.

But in his public comments, Holder's position is closer to the advocates' side. "The way we treat those in need, and particularly young people who may be fleeing from abuse, persecution and violence, goes to the core of who we are as a nation," he said Friday.

## **Associated Press**

09/12/14

### **Deportations down 20 percent, fewest since 2007**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama has quietly slowed deportations by nearly 20 percent while delaying plans to act on his own potentially to shield millions of immigrants from expulsion.

The Homeland Security Department is on pace to remove the fewest number of immigrants since 2007, according to an analysis of its data by The Associated Press.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the federal agency responsible for deportations, sent home 258,608 immigrants between the start of the budget year last Oct. 1 and July 28 this summer, a decrease of nearly 20 percent from the same period in 2013, when 320,167 people were removed.

Over 10 months in 2012, Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported 344,624 people, some 25 percent more than this year, according to federal figures obtained by the AP.

Obama announced plans earlier this year to act on his own to slow deportations but now has postponed any changes until after November's elections. The delay is an effort to shield vulnerable Democrats from potential voter ire at his unilateral actions.

The removal figures, contained in weekly internal reports marked "Official Use Only," reflect the marked decline in deportations even as Obama has delayed announcing what changes he will make to U.S. immigration policies.

Immigration advocates widely expect Obama to reduce the number of immigrants who are deported, a particularly sensitive issue in many states. Since Obama took office, his administration has removed more than 2.1 million immigrants.

There are two principal reasons fewer immigrants already are being deported:

—The Obama administration decided as early as summer 2011 to focus its deportation efforts on criminal immigrants or those who posed a threat to national security or public safety. Many others who crossed into the United States illegally or overstayed their visas and could be subject to deportation are stuck in a federal immigration court system. Last month the backlog in that system exceeded 400,000 cases for the first time, according to court data analyzed by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. For each case, it now takes several years for a judge to issue a final order to leave the U.S.

—As Border Patrol agents detain more people from countries in Central America, not Mexico, the volume and circumstances of the cases take more time for overwhelmed immigration officials and courts to process because, among other reasons, the U.S. must fly such immigrants home rather than letting them walk back across the border into Mexico. A surge in the number of immigrant families, mostly women and young children, has swamped temporary holding facilities, leading the Homeland Security Department to release many people into the U.S. interior with instructions to report back to authorities later.

Asked for comment, Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman Gillian Christensen said the agency has not released removal numbers for this budget year and officials are "still assessing a number of factors that inform ICE's ability to remove individuals."

"ICE remains focused on smart and effective immigration enforcement that prioritizes the removal of convicted criminals and recent border entrants," Christensen said in a statement.

Also, under U.S. law, immigrant children from Central America caught crossing the border alone can't be subjected to speedy removal proceedings without appearing before a judge. The government interviews Mexican and Canadian children to make sure they aren't trafficking victims; then they can be sent home quickly.

The administration instructed immigration officials starting in summer 2011 to prioritize deportation cases involving criminal immigrants. Deportations had been increasing since late 2008, but since that summer the overall number has dropped markedly.

It remains unclear exactly what actions Obama will announce after the elections. He said earlier this month the U.S. would be better off if immigrants — who in some cases, he said, have been in the U.S. for

longer than 10 years and have American children — "have a path to get legal by paying taxes and getting aboveboard, paying a fine, learning English if they have to."

But there are limits under U.S. law to actions that Obama could take without approval from Congress. He can't generally give large groups of immigrants blanket permission to remain permanently in the United States, and he can't grant them American citizenship. He almost certainly could delay indefinitely efforts to deport immigrants already in the U.S. illegally, and he could give them official work permits that would allow them to legally find jobs, obtain driver's licenses and file tax returns.

The president said this month that a partisan fight in July over how to address a surge in the number of immigrant children caught crossing the border had created the impression that there was a crisis — and a volatile climate for taking the measures he had promised.

As of early September, only 319 of more than 59,000 immigrants who were caught traveling with their families have been returned to Central America.\_\_\_\_

## **Huffington Post**

09/10/14

### **Honduran Child Rights Defender Explains Why Kids Will Keep Coming**

Roque Planas, roque.planas@huffingtonpost.com

A child rights advocate in Honduras says the United States should expect minors to continue to illegally cross into the country as long as American and Honduran political leaders remain focused on border security instead of addressing the root causes of migration.

More than 66,000 unaccompanied minors have crossed illegally into the United States this year from Central American countries like Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Many of the children turn themselves in at the border in order to be placed into detention and, hopefully, reunited with family members living in the U.S.

The Obama administration is working to expedite the deportation of Central American minors apprehended at the border, in order to send the message to others that newcomers won't be allowed to stay. The president has also delayed a promised reworking of his record-setting deportation policy.

But José Guadalupe Ruelas, director of the NGO Casa Alianza Honduras, told The Huffington Post that focusing on getting these young people out of the U.S. isn't the answer. "The question we have to ask ourselves is 'why do the people leave?'" Ruelas said. "It's never been as difficult, as expensive or as dangerous to emigrate [to the United States] as now. But as long as we don't solve the problem of employment, of violence, of crime, people will continue to come."

Ruelas, whose organization works with homeless and abused children in Central America, points to several statistics that illustrate the dire situation people in Honduras can face. Many children in the country don't attend school and can wind up as child laborers, he said. The average Honduran attends just 5.5 years in school, according to UNESCO data. Poverty and teen pregnancy are issues as well. According to UNICEF figures, 22.5 percent of Honduran women between the ages of 15 and 19 reported a pregnancy in 2010.

Honduras also has the world's highest homicide rate, according to a 2014 United Nations report. Ruelas said that while violence has been a constant problem in the country, more gangs and criminal groups are targeting children for recruitment in recent years. In 2013, according to figures from the Honduran Secretariat of Education, some 2,000 students left school over harassment from gangs, including death threats, in the city of San Pedro Sula alone.

House Republicans and other critics have said that the child migrant crisis isn't fueled by violence and poverty in Central America, but rather by U.S. policies like President Barack Obama's 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which exempts migrants brought here as children from deportation. The policy, known as DACA, does not apply to people who arrived after June of 2007.

For Ruelas, the figures highlight the reasons why Americans should expect Hondurans to continue trying to migrate, regardless of the actions of U.S. political leaders.

“Honduras has already said ‘don’t go,’ the United States has already said ‘don’t come,’” Ruelas said, referring to public campaigns launched by both countries to discourage illegal immigration. “But people are still going.”

Like Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala suffer from high poverty rates and gang violence.

The Los Angeles Times reported last month that at least five minors who had been recently deported from the United States were killed. The reports were based on an interview with a morgue director in the notoriously violent city of San Pedro Sula.

**CBS DC**

09/10/14

### **Fairfax Co. Looks To Recoup Funds For Unaccompanied Immigrant Students**

**LANHAM, Md. (WNEW)** — Fairfax County is home to more than 1,000 unaccompanied foreign children who have been released to U.S. sponsors while they await immigration proceedings.

At Tuesday's Board of Supervisors' meeting, Supervisor Pat Herrity asked County Executive Edward L. Long Jr. to calculate the costs associated with providing services to those children, and to look at options to recover the money from the federal government or the Commonwealth.

Herrity says Fairfax County schools could have more than \$14 million in new, unexpected expenses to deal with this school year since services for English as a Second Language students cost about \$14,755 per year.

“This \$14 million is going to compete with our other priorities, or it’s going to end up being a tax burden to our citizens and we’re in very difficult economic times and we’ve got to look to every avenue we can to make sure we’re providing services to our residents.”

The government estimates that 90,000 children, primarily from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, could make the journey to the U.S. border by themselves this fall, and that as many as 145,000 of them could arrive next year. Unaccompanied children often come to join a parent or family member, many times escaping criminal gangs or extreme poverty.

## Huffington Post

09/10/14

### Martin O'Malley Urges Maryland Lawyers To Help Children During Border Crisis

WASHINGTON -- Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) and state officials are urging attorneys in the state to represent unaccompanied children and teenagers who stand the risk of being deported to countries with dangerous conditions because they don't have legal help.

The chief judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals, Mary Ellen Barbera, sent a letter on Monday to bar associations and other groups across the state asking them to take on cases of unaccompanied minors on a pro bono basis, and the O'Malley administration has met with legal organizations to discuss aid needs. About 2,800 migrant children and teenagers are staying with relatives and foster families in Maryland, which is hosting the highest number of unaccompanied minors per capita of any state.

Although the flow of unaccompanied minors crossing the U.S.-Mexico border illegally has slowed, there are still tens of thousands of children and teenagers slated to go through immigration proceedings, many of whom are without legal counsel. The government does not guarantee lawyers for people -- even children -- in deportation proceedings and is currently fighting a lawsuit that would require it to do so.

For now, pro bono attorneys and legal aid groups are often left to pick up the slack to ensure migrant minors get a fair shake at staying in the U.S. The application process can be extremely complicated, and unaccompanied minors have in the past been more likely to be allowed to stay if they have legal counsel. An estimated 40 percent of minors who go into Department of Health and Human Services custody could be eligible to stay.

Some other state officials have also tried to pull in more support for unaccompanied minors. California Attorney General Kamala Harris asked law firms in July to provide pro bono representation to minors, and Democrats in the state proposed a bill in August to provide \$3 million for lawyers for unaccompanied children and teenagers in immigration proceedings.

"These young people have legal rights and responsibilities, but they cannot fully participate in complex immigration proceedings without an attorney," Harris said in August. "It is critical that these children, many of whom are fleeing extreme violence in Central America, have access to due process and adequate legal representation."

O'Malley sparred with the Obama administration earlier this summer over its plans to speed up removal proceedings for unaccompanied minors.

"We are not a country that should send children away and send them back to certain death," he said in July. "I believe that we should be guided by the greatest power we have as a people, and that is the power of our principles."

**NOLA.com**

09/10/14

**David Vitter wants to know the cost of educating unaccompanied immigrant children**

**US Senate Letter:**

**[http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/09/david\\_vitter\\_wants\\_to\\_know\\_how.html](http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2014/09/david_vitter_wants_to_know_how.html)**

By Julia O'Donoghue

The Louisiana Department of Education will let Sen. **David Vitter** know by the end of the week about **the impact unaccompanied immigrant children** are having on the state's public schools.

"We will provide answers to the Senator's important questions as soon as possible," said Barry Landry, spokesperson for the Louisiana Department of Education.

Vitter sent **a letter** to Louisiana Education Superintendent **John White** asking for specific information about cost of educating the unaccompanied immigrant children, who are mostly coming from Central American countries.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection have seen a **surge unaccompanied immigrant children** arriving at the country's southern border over the past year. The majority of children arriving are coming from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador -- three countries where violence is on the rise.

Louisiana is **housing 1,275 unaccompanied immigrant minors** that federal authorities have released to private homes while the children await deportation hearings. The sponsors taking in the children are usually family members.

In Louisiana, Jefferson Parish has been the most affected by the influx of Central American immigrant children. Nearly 500 children who recently entered the country have enrolled in Jefferson public schools since January, **according to system officials**. Many of the children don't speak English.

Louisiana allocates more funding to local school systems -- 22 percent more money per child -- for students who need help learning English, but Vitter raised concerns over other expenses associated with the immigrant children. For example, many of the children have been traumatized and may need extra services, he said.

"Often, these children were abused physically, sexually, and most certainly emotionally," he wrote in **the letter** to White.

It's unclear what Vitter wants to do with the information he has requested, but the Senator has been critical of President Barack Obama for not strengthening border security and preventing illegal immigrants from entering the country.

American public elementary and secondary schools are required to enroll all children regardless of their legal status. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that public schools could not turn away children who entered the country illegally. They also cannot charge the children's families tuition to attend school.

### **PennLive.com**

09/10/14

#### **Legislation would give states control of relocation process of unaccompanied immigrant children**

**By Ivey DeJesus | [idejesus@pennlive.com](mailto:idejesus@pennlive.com)**

U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta wants to give states and local officials control over whether the federal government can place unaccompanied minors who have illegally entered the country into their communities.

The Republican on Tuesday introduced bill that would do just that. Under the Unaccompanied Alien Children Transparency Act, the federal government must give states and communities advance notice of plans to relocate unaccompanied minors to their jurisdictions.

In addition, the proposal would require the federal government to certify that the children would not pose a health or public safety risk to communities, as well as provide information on the housing and education costs.

Barletta, who represents the 11th Congressional District, said the legislation was necessary because the tide of children who had entered the country illegally was "a problem that the federal government has dropped on the doorsteps of localities around the country."

Barletta said the Obama administration had acted in secrecy, denying right to know requests from organizations and refusing to disclose relocation sites.

"This is from a president who promised to be transparent," Barletta said in a prepared statement.

"Unfortunately, this legislation is necessary to make sure that our states and localities know exactly what the federal government is doing right in their own backyards."

Since October, tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors fleeing violence across Central America have crossed the Texas border into the United States.

Hundreds have been relocated in communities across Pennsylvania. Approximately **16 of the children are expected to arrive this month at the United Methodist Home for Children** in Lower Allen Township.

The majority of the children come from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

"I believe our constituency should have a voice in these decisions." - State Rep. Sheryl M. Delozier

Barletta in recent months has expressed concern that the children carry infectious disease or are affiliated with violent, criminal gangs.

David Reed, president and CEO of the United Methodist Home for Children, said the proposed legislation seemed counterproductive. Reed stressed that his organization was not taking a political position on the issue, which has stirred considerable controversy in the past several months.

"It's really going to slow the process down," he said. "These kids are already here, besides I'm not sure there will be enough expertise in the local area."

Reed said, the bill stands to make the relocation process unworkable. He said it would require organizations like his, which operate in almost every county in the state, to vet the process at the public level in every community.

Additionally, Reed said, his organization does not make the decision as to where the unaccompanied children will be relocated, but rather the decision would be made by hearing officers appointed by the federal government.

"All we do is take care of the kids that are sent to us," Reed said. "We keep them healthy and fed and clothed and educated."

State Rep. Sheryl M. Delozier, R-Cumberland, said she welcomes the legislation.

"As a local official, I appreciate the effort to at least recognize the fact that states should have some ability to know what's happening," she said.

Delozier, whose 88th Legislative District includes Lower Allen and Upper Allen townships and Lemoyne, Mechanicsburg, New Cumberland, Shiremanstown and Wormleysburg, said she learned some of the children were destined to arrive in her district from news reports.

"There was no communication and it's not because my congressman didn't tell us. He didn't know either," she said.

Delozier said it's appropriate that communities that will bear the brunt of housing and caring for and possibly educating the children should be involved in the process and apprised of the financial cost.

"I believe our constituency should have a voice in these decisions," she said. "I know people in my district people were frustrated they did not have an input or a chance to voice opinion."

Barletta's legislation would extend a 30-day notice and comment period for states and localities to review any proposed contract and accompanying certifications of health and public safety background checks. At the conclusion of the 30-day period, the federal government would have to hold a public hearing to address community concerns or questions.

"Not only should states and localities know about these relocation plans, they ought to know what impact the unaccompanied minors will have on the community," Barletta said. "Who exactly are they, and what kind of background screenings have been done? If they will be educated locally in public schools, how much is that going to cost? These are important questions that any community would ask."

**The Daily Caller**

09/10/14

**Feds Force Public Schools To Enroll Illegal Immigrant Children With No Medical Screening**

Read more: <http://dailycaller.com/2014/09/10/feds-force-public-schools-to-enroll-illegal-immigrant-children-with-no-medical-screening/#ixzz3CvlsMna8>

By Eric Owens

VIDEO: <http://dailycaller.com/2014/09/10/feds-force-public-schools-to-enroll-illegal-immigrant-children-with-no-medical-screening/>

Since October 2013, 50,303 “unaccompanied children” from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have crossed America’s porous Southern border to claim green cards via the immigration courts.

The Obama administration has sent none of these children home. Instead, federal officials have chosen to set aside normal immigration practices and to allow this wave of young illegal immigrants to apply for green cards via asylum applications and to disperse across the country.

With school now in session, these kids have enrolled in public schools nationwide.

In the event that any of these thousands of Central American children are carrying communicable diseases, experts claim, any subsequent health crisis will likely first manifest itself within a public school environment.

That’s alarming news. But wait! There’s more!

According to the National Center for Public Policy Research, a conservative think tank, the Obama administration has not subjected a large number of these children to proper medical screening processes.

Instead, the federal government has sent the unaccompanied minors to various U.S. locations to live with relatives or, in some cases, to live as foster wards. The children then enroll in local, taxpayer-funded public schools with no questions asked — by law.

Dr. Elaina George, a member of the national advisory council of the Project 21 black leadership network and a board-certified otolaryngologist, warned that this policy adds up to the possibility of a very serious disease outbreak.

“There’s no mechanism in place to ensure children are checked medically,” George told The Daily Caller. “It’s put everybody at risk. Anybody who comes into contact with a disease — tuberculosis, for example — is at risk.”

“This is not something that’s theoretical. This is not something that kind of happened. It’s happened,” she added.

“All you need is one person with tuberculosis to cough on somebody else. Share a cup. Other kids are at risk. Teachers are at risk. Parents are at risk. Grandparents are at risk.”

In Virginia, for example, the state Department of Education issued a July memo ordering local school districts to accept illegal immigrant children even if they have no home and no documentation concerning their health or immunization status.

The memo stated, in part, that local schools “cannot exclude from school attendance those homeless children who do not provide the requisite health or immunization information required of other students.”

School districts are supposed to refer students who don’t present immunization documentation to a local social worker who will assist with obtaining physical examinations and required vaccinations.

There’s no guarantee social workers will follow through with the assistance, though, and, as George notes, by the time sick kids rub shoulders with healthy kids, it could be entirely too late.

School districts have no choice but to enroll illegal immigrant children. In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Plyler v. Doe that a state law (in Texas) preventing the children of illegal immigrants from attending public schools was unconstitutional because denying the children basic education contributes to “the creation and perpetuation of a subclass of illiterates within our boundaries.”

Additionally, in May of this year, the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice sent a joint letter to school districts nationwide warning that they would “contravene Federal law” if they “chill or discourage the participation, or lead to the exclusion, of students based on their or their parents’ or guardians’ actual or perceived citizenship or immigration status.”

Another member of the Project 21 black leadership network, Michael Dozier, Ph.D., has noted that unchecked immigration is fraught with public health risks.

“Latin America is currently dealing with a mysterious epidemic reported to cause chronic renal failure and death that has killed more than 24,000 people in El Salvador and Nicaragua since 2000,” Dozier claimed. “It has spread as far north as southern Mexico and south into Panama. Diseases such as this could be carried across our border by illegal immigrants and could create a nationwide health crisis.”

The Obama administration is fully aware of the health risks presented by its policy of forcing potentially unvaccinated, diseased immigrants into public schools.

In a July 30 memo to Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, the Department of Homeland Security’s Inspector General, John Roth, warned that many of the illegal immigrants who have recently arrived from Central America “require treatment for communicable diseases, including respiratory illnesses, tuberculosis, chicken pox and scabies.” Some illegal immigrants transmitted some of those diseases to Border Patrol agents at a Del Rio, Texas holding facility.

To make bad matters worse, the DHS Inspector General released a report last week warning that the United States is “ill-prepared” for a pandemic. The agency noted that the federal government has failed to

manage its stockpile of protective gear and antiviral medications. At the same time, the feds have an overabundance of some supplies which would be useless in the event of a severe outbreak, such as influenza.

Project 21, which is a conservative public policy group, observes that the Obama administration's policy of placing illegal immigrant children in public schools around the country is likely to affect black children disproportionately because black children tend to live in urban areas and rural areas in the Southeast. Both have been popular destinations for illegal immigrant children.

### **Atlanta Journalism Constitution**

**09/10/14**

#### **Atlanta area lawyer to represent immigrant children in New Mexico**

By Jeremy Redmon

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

An Atlanta area attorney is preparing to travel to an immigration detention center in New Mexico next week to represent some of the Central American children and their parents who have recently crossed the U.S.-Mexico border.

Joseph Rosen — who also teaches immigration law at Atlanta's John Marshall Law School — will be helping the detainees determine if they have viable claims for asylum in the U.S. and seek relief from deportation. A former U.S. Customs Service special agent, Rosen will be doing the work in Artesia, N.M., for free in connection with the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Tens of thousands of unaccompanied Central American children and teens have streamed across the southwest border in recent months. Many say they are fleeing extreme poverty and brutal gang violence in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Since January, the government has transferred more than 1,400 of them to the care of sponsors in Georgia, where many are undergoing deportation proceedings.

“For those with little or no resources that still see the U.S. as the sanctuary against evil that they have been subjected to, these hearings are their only hope,” Rosen said on his law firm's Facebook page. “It humbles me to be a part of this and it also satisfies my sense of adventure and excitement to be a part of this effort.”

**CBS Local New York**

**09/09/14**

**Immigrant Children Face Uncertain Future In Courts**

**HUNTINGTON STATION, N.Y. (CBSNewYork/AP)** — On a recent breezy summer day, 7-year-old Kevin Torres played soccer with his neighbors in the front yard of his two-story home on Long Island as his mother watched nearby.

It's a typical suburban sight, but not for Briseida Flores, who had been separated from her son for most of the boy's life until he crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in May with the help of a smuggler who crossed the Rio Grande River with Kevin strapped to his back.

"I decided to bring him. I missed him so much," said Flores, a legal resident. Flores, who saved up \$2,800 working at a purse factory in Huntington and arranged for a distant cousin back home to take the boy to Mexico and hand him off to a "coyote," or smuggler.

"I would pray to God each day: 'My son is in your hands,' I would say," said Flores.

But Kevin could be forced to return to El Salvador. He is one of approximately 57,000 unaccompanied minors who have illegally crossed U.S. borders from Central America since last October. Since then, 4,244 of those minors have made New York their home, the largest number outside of Texas. Metropolitan New York cases are being handled by the federal Immigration Court in New York City, which is struggling to allocate resources, including pro bono lawyers.

Kevin lives in a two-story colonial divided into four different units rented by immigrant families from various Central American countries. Three other minors there arrived under similar circumstances: Yennifer Licon, 13, from Honduras, and sisters Maria, 9, and Jolleth Ruiz, 8, from Nicaragua, also crossed the border in the last year to reunite with their families.

"We had to send for our children. They were suffering over there," said Yennifer's mother, Paola Flores, 35, who crossed the border in 2004 and was arrested, but skipped her court appearances to avoid deportation. "There are so many problems with the gangs and the crime back home in San Pedro."

It is not uncommon for Central American parents to leave their children behind at a young age with other family to come work in the U.S. The adults usually make their way to a place where they already have relatives and what money they make is sent back home to provide for their children and aging parents.

When Tania Meza and her husband left Maria and Jolleth behind seven years ago, she crossed the border carrying a Bible with their pictures inside. But when her mother became ill and no one was able to watch them, she said the girls began to suffer.

It took her six months to get the \$11,000 she needed to pay the smugglers — behind the back of husband, who feared the girls having to experience the same difficult, dangerous border crossing as their parents — and the family was reunited last June.

But the journey only begins after crossing the border. According to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 54,677 minors nationwide have been released to sponsors or family members — who

make themselves responsible for the children — since the beginning of this year. Children crossing the border alone, under law, must receive a court date within 21 days of identification by authorities.

“I’m not sure how our process at court will end,” Meza said in Spanish. “We’ve already had three court dates, and they keep extending it. It would be difficult to return to Nicaragua and not be able to survive.”

Meza and Paola Flores say they plan to go back with their daughters if they’re deported.

Neena Dutta, an immigration attorney and the president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association New York chapter, said that because the minors crossing the border are often escaping gang violence and crime, the majority of them are eligible for aid and may be able to stay.

“They’re desperate for their lives,” she said. “Nobody walks through a desert just because they feel like going to a new place.”

Yennifer’s next court appearance is slated for November, and the Ruiz sisters have one scheduled for December.

“I have full faith in God,” Meza said. “If he wants us to stay, we’ll stay. If he wants us to go, we’ll go.”

According to figures released last month by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, Suffolk County

Government figures released last month show that more than 2,200 immigrant children detained at the border are now on Long Island.

With 1,181 of the children placed there, Suffolk County ranks third in the nation. Nassau County, with 1,096 kids, ranks fifth, according to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement.

## **Washington Times**

**09/09/14**

### **Eric Holder meets with Central Americans about unaccompanied children at border**

By [Phillip Swarts](#) - The Washington Times - Tuesday, September 9, 2014

Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. met Tuesday with his counterparts from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras during his trip to Mexico City, the [Justice Department](#) said.

The group discussed ways to address situations in Central America that are contributing to large numbers of unaccompanied children trying to cross the border into the U.S.

“Specifically, the group considered strategies about how to best confront the smugglers of these unaccompanied children, the violent gangs who victimize them in their home [countries](#) and the cartels who tax or exploit them in their passage,” said [Justice Department](#) spokesman Brian Fallon.

The officials agreed to form a working group that would meet regularly to address the issue. The first conference is planned for the coming weeks, Mr. Fallon said.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection estimates that 66,000 unaccompanied minors crossed the border this year, an 88 percent increase over last year.

## **Tampa Bay Times**

**09/09/14**

### **Pasco County Immigrant Shelter Controversial**

#### **Building in Pasco temporarily houses unaccompanied minors.**

By Alex Orlando

A handful of the thousands of unaccompanied minors traversing the Texas border routinely wind up in a nondescript beige building in this working-class corner of Pasco County.

There, 16 children eat hot meals and sleep in bunks before uniting with family members around the country. Their presence, hidden behind the shelter's high fences, has aroused many of the thorny aspects of the nation's larger immigration debate.

Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services signed a federal contract to serve as a shelter for immigrant kids, who typically stay two weeks. The shelter recently won a grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement and is seeking to expand to 32 beds, sparking concern among neighbors and Pasco political leaders.

Gulf Coast says the expansion won't alter the neighborhood or crowd local schools. It will only allow for more aid to unaccompanied children — a mission the shelter has been pursuing for decades.

"The (unaccompanied children) program is another opportunity," Gulf Coast said in a statement, "to serve a vulnerable population that extends the work we began in 1965 with refugees who were Holocaust survivors."

Local vitriol over the expansion flared at the Pasco County Planning Commission's meeting last month.

Citizens from inside and outside the county came to express their disgust with the commission for allowing the shelter to exist in the first place. They called it illegal. They called it an invasion.

"This facility wants to capitalize on the federal government's underhanded way of pushing their immigration on the people of this community and on the people of the United States of America," said Tom Kerr of Wesley Chapel.

Cynthia Scheu of Holiday was upset because when she walks her dog by the shelter, she can't see over the 12-foot fence to look at who is living near her.

"We don't know who these kids are," she told commissioners. "You can't see them."

The debate made its way into the local County Commission race where candidates Ken Littlefield and Bob Robertson were asked for their opinions. Littlefield, who lost recently in the Republican primary, urged current commissioners to use the chance to stand up to the feds.

"We are not going to be the receptacle, or the dumping ground, of the mistakes you have made by not sealing the border," he said.

Robertson, one of Littlefield's Republican opponents who was also defeated, doubted that stance.

"I think it's probably being made more of than it really should be."

The shelter's request has been delayed until the next planning commission meeting in October.

The Aug. 5 discussion ended with Commissioner Art Woodworth reminding the audience that political persuasions should not figure into zoning requirements.

"It's not within our purview to decide who lives where," he said. "The county would be sued immediately if we tried to do anything like that. Our job is to determine whether or not a specific use is correct for that certain location."

Depending who you ask, the refugees are either innocent children who can't be ignored, or they are vagrants with unknown backgrounds who will inevitably be a drain on the public till.

Some of the speakers at the Planning Commission meeting said they worry the shelter children will end up on school buses with their own kids.

That's unlikely, said Isabel Sousa-Rodriguez, Central Florida advocate with the Florida Immigrant Coalition. The programs are meant to be transitional and children usually remain at shelters for 14 to 30 days. They don't attend local schools.

John Ovink, a Tampa immigration lawyer, said courts are overloaded with cases involving unaccompanied children. He sees them in the courtrooms wide-eyed and bewildered. Some don't speak a word of English. They come from impoverished towns plagued with drug crimes in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Their parents send them on long and miserable journeys here.

"These are kids just like any other kid," he said, "and they need help."

The extent to which Americans should provide that help is where opinions diverge.

**Huffington Post**

**09/09/14**

**As Unaccompanied Children Cross Border, One Group Tries To Get Them Lawyers**

WASHINGTON -- Wendy Young has witnessed many immigration court hearings where young children go up against a judge alone. There's one that sticks out in her memory.

A few years ago, she was observing an immigration court in Baltimore when a 5-year-old girl was called up to the judge. The little girl was wearing a red Sunday dress and tiny Ugg boots, with her hair pulled back in pigtails. The child was carrying a baby doll, and when she sat down before the judge she could barely see over the table -- much less make a case for why she shouldn't be deported.

"I've been working on this issue for 24 years, and I was tearing up," said Young, president of the group Kids In Need of Defense, which helps minors get legal representation in immigration proceedings. "It's just so patently unfair to put these kids through this process unless they have some help."

With tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors having crossed the U.S.-Mexico border illegally this year, immigration courts are likely to see many more children like that little girl, all of them facing a complicated process without any legal help. Since October 2013, border agents have apprehended more than 66,000 children and teenagers traveling without their parents, most of them from the Central American countries of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Many of them are escaping violence, threats, poverty and abuse in their native countries. Some suffer through more as they make the long trek to the United States, often to reunite with family members already here. While many migrants are teenagers, others are as young as toddlers.

These minors don't get any guarantee of legal counsel in immigration proceedings -- indeed, no one does. Since immigration is a civil matter, there's no right to counsel, even for children. That means that some minors are sure to be deported even if they have a legitimate need for relief, simply because they won't be able to make the case on their own.

While an estimated 40 percent of minors who go into Health and Human Services custody are eligible for immigration relief, they are more likely to get relief if they receive legal counsel. Before this summer, about half of unaccompanied minors went without attorneys. Given the current influx, Young said it's likely the proportion of children and teenagers going through deportations alone could climb as high as 90 percent.

Enter Kids In Need of Defense. Known as KIND, the group is attempting to get legal representation for more unaccompanied minors by connecting them with pro bono attorneys who can offer their services. The organization was established in 2008 -- before the rapid increase in unaccompanied minors entering the country illegally -- by Microsoft and Angelina Jolie, the actress and special envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Jolie's prior work with refugees had been mostly focused on events in other countries, but even as early as 2008, when the flow of unaccompanied minors across the border was much smaller, it was clear the U.S. wasn't immune from such crises. Out of that need, KIND was established to help connect pro bono attorneys with children who needed help.

KIND now has about 35 staff members, eight offices and more than 200 partnerships with major law firms, corporations and law schools. It has trained more than 8,000 attorneys to do pro bono work. But that's still not enough to provide legal counsel to every unaccompanied minor.

"For every child that we are able to help, how many are we not able to help?" said Young. "And what are they going to do?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Given how affecting these children's plights are, it may seem remarkable that one of their last lines of protection comes from a group associated with and co-founded by a Hollywood A-lister. But that's only because the political system at large has failed to act.

Attorney General Eric Holder said last year in a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing that it was "inexcusable" that children and teenagers "have immigration decisions made on their behalf, against them, whatever and they're not represented by counsel."

"That's simply not who we are as a nation," he said then.

But events have since overtaken rhetoric. And as unaccompanied minors began showing up at the border in greater and greater numbers, the Justice Department was forced to defend its practice of putting them before immigration judges without an attorney.

Currently, the government is engaged in a lawsuit after civil rights groups alleged that failing to provide counsel for these minors was a violation of the Constitution. The Justice Department argued that should the groups succeed in their case, it would effectively prevent the deportation of anyone under the age of 18. The judge in the case has not yet issued a ruling.

"The government cannot stop the removal proceedings of every immigrant youth in the United States," Deputy Assistant Attorney General Leon Fresco argued in court last week. "That would create a magnet effect that the United States is not prepared to handle."

Part of the problem is the lack of federal funding to deal with the border crisis. Congress failed to provide any such funding before departing for the August recess. President Barack Obama requested \$3.7 billion to address the crisis, and was quickly rebuffed by the Republican-led House of Representatives. The Senate failed to approve Democrats' proposal for \$2.7 billion.

Both of those plans included funding to increase legal representation for unaccompanied minors. The White House requested \$15 million for direct legal representation, and Senate Democrats upped the figure to \$50 million.

But neither of those proposals stood a chance in the House, which eventually approved \$694 million in funding to deal with the border crisis -- coupled with measures that Obama deemed "extreme and unworkable." That bill did not include any funding for attorneys for unaccompanied minors, and a subsequent effort by the Justice Department to transfer money for legal representation was blocked by House Republicans.

Separately, Democrats have pushed for legislation that would require the government to provide legal representation to children and to people with mental disabilities. But that legislation hasn't received a vote and isn't likely to during the brief window between now and November's midterm elections.

Now, the administration and outside groups are making efforts to expand legal representation for minors without the legislative branch's assistance. The progressive advocacy outfit MoveOn has raised more than \$100,000 for KIND, while the Justice Department launched a program with AmeriCorps in June to provide grants for about 100 lawyers and paralegals who will work with unaccompanied minors. Vice President Joe Biden has met with groups to discuss legal representation concerns. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and Juan Osuna, director of the Executive Office for Immigration Review at the Department of Justice, urged attorneys at the American Bar Association meeting in August to provide pro bono services.

KIND has lately drawn increased interest from corporations and legal firms. Greenberg Traurig, a law firm with locations around the world, has been involved with KIND for a few years but is upping its pro bono work with the group. The firm doesn't take a stance on whether unaccompanied minors should, as a rule, be granted relief, but attorneys there said they are invested in the principle of due process.

"Some of [the unaccompanied minors] are eligible and they should have attorneys that can help them navigate the system, and the ones who aren't eligible obviously should still have attorneys to help them navigate the system," said Caroline Heller, who leads the pro bono work in Greenberg Traurig's New York office. "Ultimately, a court is going to decide whether they should stay or not. But that doesn't mean they're not entitled to due process."

\* \* \* \* \*

As groups like KIND struggle to get counsel for as many children and teenagers as possible, many activists are growing worried about the number of immigration cases piling up.

The backlog in immigration courts is large already, and although the influx in minors entering the country illegally has slowed, it seems likely to overwhelm the system further. Under a law passed in 2008 with large bipartisan majorities, unaccompanied minors from countries other than Mexico and Canada go through a more extensive screening process before they can be deported, including the opportunity to see a judge. The White House, along with most Republicans and some Democrats, has said that 2008 law should be changed so unaccompanied minors from other countries can be deported more quickly.

With this argument facing intense opposition from a majority of Democrats, including some who lobbed criticism directly at the White House, the law remained intact as Congress left for the August recess earlier this summer. KIND was one of the groups lobbying against changing the 2008 law. For officials there and at other groups, the idea of expediting removals is troubling, since building a case for reprieve takes time, information and often outside help.

"They're going to put them through this very fast-tracked screening at the border -- we're going to jeopardize these kids' lives," Young said. "We could be sending them back to be killed."

Heading into the remaining months of this Congress, the goal for Young and others at KIND is to keep pushing back against expedited removal proceedings and to help as many minors as possible get legal

counsel. The worry is that lawmakers, given that the border crisis continues to be a political issue, will try once again to change the 2008 law before the November midterms.

The little girl Young saw in a courtroom three years ago did end up getting assistance. Young said the judge, aware that a KIND staffer was in the back of the room, eventually stopped questioning the child and told her to go seek out the group's help instead.

"I wish people would take a deep breath and remember these are children," said Young. "Regardless of whether they're eligible for protection under immigration laws, they're still vulnerable just by virtue of being children, and we owe it to them and to ourselves to take the time to sort out who should stay and who should go."

### **Associated Press**

09/09/14

#### **Administration: 'Worst is over for now' on border**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration renewed its plea Monday for Congress to provide additional money to deal with the unaccompanied migrant children at the border, even as Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson declared that "the worst is over for now."

The request seemed likely to fall on deaf ears as neither party showed an appetite to revive an issue that's faded from the spotlight as arrivals at the border have dropped dramatically.

Johnson said in a statement that without \$1.2 billion in additional funding for 2015, he will be forced to take money from other accounts, such as \$405 million moved earlier this summer from the disaster relief fund.

"This reprogramming is not sustainable, and leaves the nation vulnerable to unacceptable homeland security risks," Johnson said.

"Though the worst is over for now, there are still bills to be paid and our border security efforts must be sustained to prevent another spike like we saw this year," he said.

A spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said that the House had already dealt with the issue by agreeing to a smaller sum prior to Congress' five-week summer recess, which ended Monday. "Now, it is up to Senate Democrats to act," said spokesman Michael Steel.

The House Republican bill included policies opposed by Senate Democrats to return migrant kids back home more quickly without hearings, so no deal was ever reached on President Barack Obama's \$3.7 billion request for the border, and no final bill passed.

But now that arrivals of Central American children have dropped, lawmakers can avoid addressing the contentious issue with November midterm elections around the corner. Aides in both parties say the issue is on the back burner and looks likely to stay there for the couple weeks Congress is in session ahead of the election. At most the administration might get some additional spending flexibility it's asked for in a temporary government funding measure slated for votes in the next two weeks.

In his statement Johnson noted that only 3,141 unaccompanied kids crossed the border illegally in August, compared with a high of 10,622 in June as the crisis peaked. August's number was the lowest since February 2013.

The administration took a number of steps to respond to the crisis, and Johnson's memo listed some of those, including reassigning immigration judges, speeding removals of adult migrants and launching public relations campaigns meant to discourage people from coming. But much of the reduction is seasonal as the summer heat has traditionally discouraged migrants, and it's not clear how much of an impact the administration's policies had. Experts also say the numbers may start rising again, though likely not until early next year.

The spike on the border pushed the issue near the top of public concerns and it was front-and-center at some congressional town halls earlier in the summer. The attention on the issue helped convince Obama to put off a planned executive order to defer deportations for millions, infuriating immigration advocates.

But other events, including terrorist threats overseas, have now pushed the border crisis from the headlines.

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**CNSnews.com**

## **New York Spends \$147.7 Million on Unaccompanied Alien Children in Public Schools**

*September 8, 2014 - 1:14 PM*

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By *Katherine Rodriguez*

The state of New York is laying out the "red-carpet treatment" for children who have crossed the border illegally.

It turns out that they are the highest spenders in the nation on illegal immigrant children who enroll in public schools, with New York school districts shelling out a staggering \$147.7 million to subsidize their education, according to a report released by the Federation For Immigration Reform (FAIR).

The report shows New York ranking second-highest in the nation for the number of illegal immigrant children enrolled in public schools, with 4,244 illegal immigrant children enrolled. It ranks first among states that do not sit along the southern border.

The only state that ranks higher than New York overall for the number of illegal immigrant children enrolled in school is Texas with 5,280 minors enrolled in public school.

Still, the annual cost per pupil in Texas (\$15,008) is actually only 42 percent of the cost for educating a student in New York (\$35,520), which leads the nation in cost per illegal alien student.

Washington, DC (\$31,734), Alaska (\$31,592) and New Jersey (\$31,367) also spend more than \$30,000 per illegal alien student annually.

FAIR, a non-profit that focuses on curbing illegal immigration, released a map which shows how much states are spending on illegal immigrant children in public schools:

FAIR documents that almost 37,000 unaccompanied minors enter the United States every year and enroll in school:

This year, there will be almost 37,000 “unaccompanied” alien minors who will be enrolling in public school in the United States. These kids will require special Limited English Proficient (LEP) classes conducted in Spanish, or in other languages indigenous to Central American, as well as other taxpayer funded services, such as free and reduced school meals. FAIR has documented these costs in previous reports (Utah, Nevada, Maryland). The per pupil cost for unaccompanied minors is likely to be even higher than the average LEP student, since the recent illegal aliens of school age who came in the recent surge have had little to no previous schooling. Once again the costs of federal government’s failed immigration policies are borne at the local level, and the nation’s public school system is where the costs are most visible.

CNS News previously reported that many of these 37,000 children who enroll in public schools are placed with their parents or some relatives while they wait for their court cases to be processed.

Ninety-nine percent of unaccompanied minors who enter the U.S. illegally are of school age and of those enrolled 98 percent would be enrolled in public school as of this academic year, according to a recent Pew Research Center study.

The average per-pupil cost per student according to the Census Bureau is \$20,297, but because many unaccompanied minors enter the U.S. with a limited knowledge of English, the cost per student goes up.

The Thornton Commission in Maryland in 2001, a CRS report in 2004 and a companion report in Nevada in 2006 stated that the additional cost of having a limited knowledge of English is between 10 and 200 percent.

Anna Giaritelli, a press secretary for FAIR, said that the reason why the cost is so high for many of these students is because many of them will require specialized teachers who will teach students one-on-one.

"In addition to students knowing very little English or none at all, these minors now live in poverty so they will also be eligible for school-subsidized free meals, Giaritelli said. "Additionally, they likely received very little education in their home countries so in New York they will require instructors who can speak to them in specific Central American dialects as well as participate in remedial learning programs."

When these unaccompanied children land in the United States, they enter the public education system and stretch the resources of these local schools struggling to make ends meet.

But the problem is far from over.

CNS News also reported that there are still more children to be released into the system:

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), 62,998 unaccompanied alien children under the age of 17 have illegally crossed the southern border since October of last year. So there are still thousands of children and teens in detention centers waiting to be processed before they are released throughout the U.S.

The vast majority are from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, according to the CBP.

## **Reutgers**

**09/08/14**

### **Number of Unaccompanied Children Crossing Illegally into US Plummet**

WASHINGTON—

The number of children crossing illegally on their own into the United States dropped 70 percent from June to August, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said on Monday as he appealed to Congress for \$1.2 billion in supplemental funding.

A year-long surge that brought nearly 63,000 unaccompanied children to the southwestern U.S. border had the Obama administration grappling for ways to handle the influx and stem the flow of children and families trying to get into the country.

President Barack Obama on Saturday cited the crisis, which he said made Americans wary of new immigration measures, as the reason he put off taking executive action on immigration reform until after November congressional elections.

U.S. government figures show 3,141 unaccompanied children tried to cross the border in August, compared with this year's peaks of 10,580 in May and 10,622 in June. The July figure was 5,501. Adults with children trying to cross into the country dropped to 3,295 in August from 16,329 in June, they show.

Johnson said the August figure for unaccompanied children was lower than last year's and the lowest since February 2013.

To contain this year's surge, U.S. authorities opened temporary shelters, reassigned border agents, added processing centers and immigration judges and launched Spanish-language campaigns in the countries most of the children were fleeing, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

"The aggressive border security measures recounted above have cost money," Johnson said in a statement.

Obama in July sought \$3.7 billion in supplemental funding for DHS, which includes the Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agencies.

Congress did not approve the funding before its summer recess and Johnson said he was forced to reprogram money from the disaster relief fund and other homeland security priorities.

With lawmakers back in session, the department is seeking \$1.2 billion in supplemental funding for fiscal year 2015.

"Though the worst of the spike in illegal migration is over and back to 2013 levels, we must still pay our bills and continue to sustain the measures we put in place to prevent another spike in illegal migration of unaccompanied children and adults with children," Johnson said in a statement.

## **Miami Herald**

09/08/14

### **South Florida third in nation in accepting unaccompanied Central American minors**

#### **South Florida ranks third among the nation's metropolitan areas with the highest number of Central American minors who made the illegal trek to the United States.**

BY Alfonso Chardy, [achardy@elnuevoherald.com](mailto:achardy@elnuevoherald.com)

Twelve-year-old Kevin Mejía has enrolled at Brownsville Middle School, two months after crossing the Mexican border following a trip from his native Honduras.

He is among more than 1,000 Central American minors who have crossed the border in an unprecedented surge this year and have been enrolled or will be enrolled in local public schools, according to Miami-Dade School Board member Raquel Regalado.

Kevin is also among tens of thousands of immigrant minors who have been placed with parents, family members and other sponsors throughout the nation between Jan. 1 and July 31.

South Florida ranks third among the nation's metropolitan areas with the highest number of Central American minors placed with sponsors, chiefly parents and other relatives, according to the latest federal government figures.

Harris County, which includes Houston, has the largest number, with 2,866 minors placed with families, followed by Southern California (including Los Angeles and San Diego) at 2,369, and then South Florida with 2,268 (including Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties).

For the nation as a whole, the total was 29,890, according to the figures posted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the agency in charge of the program.

Besides the top three regions, there are other important pockets of minors released to families. These include counties in Virginia, Maryland, New York, Georgia and North Carolina.

The locations reflect the historic destinations of Central American immigrants in the United States.

Civil wars, gang violence and natural disasters have fueled the dramatic growth in Central American communities in the United States over the last 50 years.

In 1960, less than 50,000 Central Americans resided in the country, according to the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute. Today, people born in Central America account for nearly eight percent or 3.1 million of the immigrant population, the study says. The numbers began to increase in 1980 and accelerated in 1990, a period coinciding with civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, as well major hurricanes and earthquakes.

According to the study, California had the largest number of Central American immigrants, more than 800,000, followed by Texas with more than 350,000 and Florida, with more than 320,000.

Francisco Portillo, president of Miami-based Francisco Morazán Honduran Organization, said the devastation left by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 propelled the first major migration wave from Honduras to South Florida. Since then, he added, more and more Hondurans have settled here.

Among the many families Portillo has helped is that of Kevin Mejia, whose mother — Darling Jorleny Mejia — is in Miami.

“Since 1980, due to the wars in Central America, many Central Americans, mainly from El Salvador and Guatemala, came to southern California,” said Leoncio Velazquez, president of Hondurans United of Los Angeles. “They came here because Los Angeles was one of the most-Latin cities in the United States. The Mexicans were here and the same trend occurred in Miami with the Cuban exiles being one of the reasons Central Americans went there.”

More than 66,000 unaccompanied children have crossed the border so far this fiscal year, according to figures from U.S. Customs and Border Protection. That's an 87.8 percent increase over arrivals last fiscal year.

While these figures are unprecedented, U.S. officials indicate that the flow of minors may be slowing.

The Associated Press said last week that the Border Patrol detained 3,129 minors in August, compared to 5,400 in July and 10,600 in June.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/09/08/4336919/s-florida-third-in-accepting-children.html#storylink=cpy>

**Associated Press**

**09/08/14**

**160 immigrant children relocated to Greenville, Beaufort counties**

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina — The federal government says that about 160 of the more than 430 unaccompanied immigrant children apprehended at the nation's southern border and sent to South Carolina have been relocated in Beaufort and Greenville counties.

The Island Packet of Hilton Head reports (<http://bit.ly/1tloGjj>) that information recently released from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Settlement lists the counties where more than 50 children have been relocated.

Only two South Carolina counties are on the list. Greenville County has 106 relocated kids while 56 have been sent to Beaufort County. In all, 434 children were relocated to South Carolina during the first half of the year.

Beaufort County Sheriff P.J. Tanner says the children's names and addresses where they are staying have not been released.

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Information from: The Island Packet, <http://www.islandpacket.com>

**Myrtle Beach Online**

09/08/14

**56 immigrant children relocated to Beaufort County, but whereabouts secret**

**By MATT MCNAB**

Fifty-six unaccompanied and undocumented immigrant children have been relocated to Beaufort County, according to government data.

Of the tens of thousands of children taken into federal custody, nearly four out of five have been temporarily released and sent to a small share of counties, according to recent data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Settlement.

The data listed counties to where more than 50 children had been relocated. In South Carolina, only Beaufort County and Greenville County, with 106 relocated children, were included on that list. In total, 434 children have been relocated to South Carolina between January and July.

The new data give some sense of where the children have been relocated. However, information such as their names and specific whereabouts have not been made available, even to local government officials, Beaufort County Sheriff P.J. Tanner said Thursday at a meeting of the Beaufort Women's Republican Club.

Tanner said knowing the names and whereabouts of the children would help if an issue arose with them, and would also help address concerns from residents about what effects they might be having. However, if the situation was sensitive, the federal government could be understood for withholding it, he said.

"It might be that it's a need-to-know basis and Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security don't think we need to know," he said. "Or it may be court-ordered or agency-ordered not to divulge that information. If that's the case, I completely respect and understand it."

Attempts Thursday and Friday to reach Dorothy Addison, the state coordinator for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, were unsuccessful.

Tanner and state Sen. Tom Davis, R-Beaufort, criticized the secrecy surrounding the relocation of immigrant children to South Carolina at a Bluffton Tea Party meeting Aug. 12. Davis said Friday he still had not received information from the federal government about the children.

The children are allowed to stay in the United States and attend school until their immigration status is ruled upon in court. But it could take months -- or even years -- for a case to reach resolution, according to Lowcountry Immigration Coalition co-chairman George Kanuck.

Kanuck said his organization also does not know the children's whereabouts and had not heard of an exact number before last week. Local members of the Catholic Diocese of Charleston had told him that only a few children had been relocated to Beaufort County, after he reached out to local religious organizations to try to find out more about the children.

However, the Catholic Diocese is not taking care of any children in Beaufort County, spokesman Maria Aselage said.

Kanuck said he had also contacted the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the contracted partner of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, but it, too, was reluctant to give out information about the children. Attempts Thursday and Friday to reach the South Carolina chapter of the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service were unsuccessful.

Although Kanuck and the coalition haven't heard from the children or their guardians, they have offered assistance, such as directing them to food banks and other resources.

Kanuck estimated that the majority of the children in Beaufort County likely were placed with relatives or guardians, owing to the county's large Hispanic population. Those who moved more recently probably weren't attending local schools yet, as they are still adjusting to a new home, he said.

If the children are enrolled in the Beaufort County School District, schools are prohibited by federal law from asking about the children's immigration status, district spokesman Jim Foster said.

"If a child comes to us with a local address, we have to educate them," Foster said.

Tanner said the children aren't affecting the Sheriff's Office, but it still needs information about the relocated children. Without it, the Sheriff's Office is dependent on the immigrants for identification, and for it to be accurate, Tanner said.

On Thursday, he echoed a similar message he shared with members of the Bluffton Tea Party: There must be trust between federal and local governments.

## **Click2Houston.com**

09/08/14

### **Harris County sponsoring most immigrant children in US**

VIDEO: <http://www.click2houston.com/news/harris-county-sponsoring-most-immigrant-children-in-us/27945676>

Author: Robert Arnold, Investigative Reporter, rarnold@kprc.com

**HOUSTON** - As Congress returned to work after its annual break, one of the top priorities remained dealing the crisis on the southern border. Much of that debate revolves around the care of thousands of unaccompanied children awaiting immigration hearings.

Congress' return to work comes as the federal government released new information on where many of these children are being housed. According to the Office of Refugee Resettlement nearly 30,000 unaccompanied children were sent to live in sponsored homes between Jan. 1 and July 31.

According to information from the federal government 2,866 children were placed in sponsored homes in Harris County, the highest in the country. The second highest number of sponsored homes was in Los Angeles County, followed by Nassau County, New York.

The ORR defines sponsors as "adults who are suitable to provide for the child's physical and mental well-being." The ORR reports these children typically remain in these homes until their immigration status is determined by a court.

"Houston and Harris County are generous, the citizens here have generous hearts," said U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee.

Lee supports the passage of a more than \$1 billion funding package to handle the care of these children awaiting immigration hearings, pay for overtime and border security.

"We are defined in this country by how we take care of our children so I think it's imperative that we, first of all, pass the \$1.8 billion," said Lee. "We have a responsibility to give these children due process."

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson also urged again Congress to grant additional funding.

"I hope it will support the men and women who worked overtime along the southwest border and provide this Department with an additional \$1.2 billion in funding in fiscal year 2015," Johnson wrote in a statement.

President Barack Obama also stated he is delaying taking executive action on our country's immigration system while the debate continues as to whether thousands of unaccompanied will be allowed to stay in the United States or deported.

"I am going to act because it is the right thing for the country, but it going to be more sustainable and effective if the public understands what the facts are," President Obama told NBC "Meet The Press" moderator Chuck Todd.

The federal government reports the number of immigrants caught illegally crossing the southwest border continues to drop sharply. However, federal officials still will not release how many of those immigrants caught crossing the border had to be released on their own recognizance because of a lack of detention space.

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## San Jose Inside

09/04/14

### Poll: Most Californians Favor Sheltering Migrant Children

By Silicon Valley Newsroom

Most California voters would rather have the U.S. shelter rather than deport the tens of thousands of unaccompanied Central American children entering the country illegally, according to a poll released Wednesday.

According to the new Field Poll, 58 percent of the state's voters say the U.S. should offer "shelter and support" to the migrant children until the government figures out their long-term status.

Thirty-three percent think otherwise.

Fifty-five percent of those surveyed would like to see President Obama issue an executive order to deal with the children in the absence of Congressional action. Pollsters called 1,280 registered voters in six languages across the state. Not surprisingly, opinions were divided across party lines.

The child refugee crisis at the southern border has been growing for years. But it exploded in recent months. More than 50,000 children showed up alone to the Mexican border within the first half of 2014—a 90 percent increase from last year—and were placed in detention. Another 90,000 are expected to arrive before the end of the year and an estimated 140,000 in 2015 as children escape violence in their home countries. Border patrol officials have called it a "humanitarian crisis."

In August, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted in favor of a plan to temporarily house some of those migrant children to keep them out of overcrowded, unsanitary detention facilities at the border. Some 30,000 of those children are already being cared for throughout the country, while authorities decide whether to keep or deport them back to their families.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren brought the proposal to supervisors in the absence of federal action on immigration.

County officials will work with nonprofits, including the Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County and the Bill Wilson Center, to place up to 50 children with a local host family. The county will seek federal funding to

"Federal law states that [unaccompanied minors] must be served 'in the least restrictive environment,' and host homes are less restrictive and more family-like compared to detention centers," Bill Wilson CEO Sparky Harlan wrote for San Jose Inside last month. "This is especially important when it comes to younger children, for whom stable, trusting relationships are even more central."

	<b>Offer shelter and support while determining their long term status</b>	<b>Deport them immediately</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
<b>Total statewide</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Party registration</b>			
Democrats	72%	20	8
Republicans	35%	54	11
No party preference/other	60%	31	9
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>			
White non-Hispanic	56%	36	8
Latino	70%	21	9
African American*	55%	36	9
Asian American	45%	40	15
<b>Obama job performance</b>			
Approve	76%	18	6
Disapprove	36%	53	11
No opinion	69%	19	12

\* Small sample base.

## **NOLA.com**

09/04/14

### **Five Louisiana parishes are housing unaccompanied immigrant children**

By Julia O'Donoghue, NOLA.com

Unaccompanied immigrant children from south of the U.S. border were released to sponsors in at least five Louisiana parishes during the first six months of 2014.

The children -- mostly from Central American countries -- are awaiting courts proceedings on deportation while staying in the private homes of family members and other sponsors.

From January to July, the federal Office of Refugee and Resettlement placed 173 children in East Baton Rouge Parish, 533 children in Jefferson Parish, 51 children in Lafayette Parish, 237 children in Orleans Parish and 54 children in St. Tammany Parish.

Overall, Louisiana is housing 1,275 of 37,477 unaccompanied immigrant minors federal authorities released to sponsors' private homes across the country during the first six months of the year, according to figures publicized Wednesday.

It's possible that some unaccompanied minors are living in other Louisiana parishes. The federal government has only released county/parish-level data for those American localities housing over 50 children.

Most of the immigrant children's sponsors are their own family members, according to federal officials.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection saw 66,127 unaccompanied immigrant children arrive at the country's southern border from October through August of this year. This is an 88 percent increase over the same time period in the previous year, according to Customs and Border Protection data.

The majority of children arriving are coming from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador -- three countries where violence is on the rise. But the number of children trying to cross the Mexican border appears to be declining. Authorities apprehended a little over 3,100 minors in August compared to more than 10,600 minors in June.

In New Orleans immigration court, the majority of the unaccompanied minors awaiting deportation hearings are from Honduras, a country with one of the world's highest murder rates in recent years.

Both Gov. Bobby Jindal and U.S. Sen. David Vitter have already asked for more information about the unaccompanied immigrant children that have been placed in Louisiana. Jindal also took a short trip to the U.S. border to talk to Texas state officials about the minors trying to enter the country.

A handful of states took in more unaccompanied immigrant minors than Louisiana during the first half of the year. California has taken in 3,909 children. Florida has taken in 3,809 children. Maryland has taken in 2,804 children. Texas has taken in 5,280 minors, according to statistics provided by the federal government.

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### **Associated Press**

09/03/14

#### **Number of child immigrants at border declining**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of immigrant children caught alone illegally crossing the Mexican border into the United States continued to decline in August, according to figures disclosed Wednesday by the Homeland Security Department.

Last month Border Patrol agents apprehended 3,129 children, mostly from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. In July agents found more than 5,400 children, while in June the number was more than 10,600.

The Obama administration has been cautious about speculating over what led to the recent decline, saying several factors are likely at play. Historically, the number of immigrants caught crossing the border illegally declines during the hottest summer months.

Since the start of the budget year in October, more than 66,000 unaccompanied children have apprehended crossing the border illegally, nearly double the number from the 2013 budget year.

The dramatic increase in the number of child immigrants this year prompted the administration to step up enforcement efforts against human smuggling rings and launch a public relations campaign urging parents in Central America not to send their children on the dangerous trek through Mexico. The Justice

Department has also ordered that newly arrived child immigrants facing deportation hearings should have their cases moved to the top of the federal immigration court's docket. The court has a backlog of more than 375,000 pending cases.

Officials in Mexico last month started pulling Central Americans off the top of a lumbering freight train known as "La Bestia," or The Beast, which has routinely carried thousands of migrants north toward the U.S. border.

The crush of Central American children found crossing the border caught the administration off guard earlier this year and strained Homeland Security's resources. President Barack Obama called the situation a humanitarian crisis and asked Congress to approve an emergency \$3.7 billion spending bill to deal with the issue. Congress left Washington for the August recess before the Republican-controlled House and Democratic-led Senate could agree on a spending package.

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## San Jose Mercury News

09/03/14

### Majority of Californians favor allowing migrant kids to stay

By David E. Early, [dearly@mercurynews.com](mailto:dearly@mercurynews.com)

By huge margins, California voters favor the United States offering "shelter and support" to thousands of unaccompanied Central American children entering the country illegally, rather than promptly deporting them, according to a Field Poll released Wednesday. The survey also found that voters in the Golden State would — also by wide margins — approve of President Barack Obama using his executive powers to set a national policy toward dealing with the children if Congress fails to act. "I feel relieved, grateful to be in a state that recognizes the rights of children regardless of where they are from," said Sebastian Zavala, chief program officer for Catholic Charities of the East Bay. "This poll is a good indicator that people are looking out for one another, looking to reach others in need, as members of the human family."

The Federation for American Immigration Reform, however, mocked the poll as a classic "forced choice" by pitting a "dire option" against a "soft, cuddly" one — temporary help for the children versus instant deportation.

"The immigration issue is often posited between one of two spectra — either kicking in doors in the middle of the night and massive roundups, separating women from children, or amnesty," said Bob Dane of FAIR, which is trying to bring down levels of both legal and illegal immigration.

In August, Gov. Jerry Brown and top Democrats in the Legislature agreed to spend \$3 million to help unaccompanied minors by providing legal assistance.

California has seen the arrival of more than 4,000 children, mostly from Guatemala, Honduras and El

Salvador. The youngsters are among 63,000 young migrants who have crossed the U.S.-Mexico border since last October. They say they are trying to escape poverty, drug cartels, political upheaval and high crime rates.

Over the summer, Obama announced that if Congress continued to do nothing on the issue he would use his executive powers to help the children. But over the weekend it became clear that the president still isn't ready to take executive action on the status of either the unaccompanied minors or 11 million other illegal immigrants.

The Field Poll surveyed 1,280 registered California voters in six languages from Aug. 14-28. The poll's margin of error is plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.

The survey found that 58 percent of California voters say the U.S. should offer assistance to the thousands of children "while it determines their long-term status." Thirty-three percent want the children to be deported immediately. Another 9 percent have no opinion.

As is usually the case on immigration issues, the responses broke down along party lines.

Asked what the U.S. policy should be toward the children, 72 percent of Democrats supported "shelter and support" while their long-term status was worked out. Fifty-four percent of Republicans wanted the children immediately deported. Sixty percent of voters without a party preference supported helping the children.

On the question of whether Obama should use his executive powers to formalize policies for dealing with the unaccompanied children, 74 percent of Democrats supported the use of executive power, while 65 percent of Republicans opposed it. Fifty-four percent of voters who expressed no party preference favored Obama taking the executive action.

Sixty-six percent of Latinos and 64 percent of African-Americans were in favor of such action. But only a slight majority (51 percent) of whites and 44 percent of Asian-Americans were in favor of it.

The poll also asked voters whether the U.S. should renew the Obama administration's policy of no longer deporting immigrants whose parents brought them here illegally when they were children. Those immigrants often refer to themselves as "Dreamers" — a name that comes from the proposed-but-neverenacted U.S. Dream Act, designed to allow the young immigrants to stay in this country.

The number of Californians in favor (59 percent) of renewing the Obama administration's 2012 policy is more than double (29 percent) of those against renewing it. Democrats (78 percent) support helping the Dreamers, while Republicans (53 percent) oppose the idea.

"The Dreamers should be stopped immediately," said Michael Hieb, of Livermore. "Their parents are lawbreakers. I have to follow the rules. They should have to follow them, too. Sorry, but the children have to pay for the sins of their fathers." Dane of FAIR agreed: "If Americans feel they have the moral obligation to fund this generation of illegal immigrants, won't we have the same obligation for the future ones that come?"

And they *will* come." On the question of whether the president should use his executive powers to stop the deportation of most illegal immigrants, 46 percent favored the move, while 36 percent opposed it.

Sixty percent of Democrats supported that broad use of presidential powers, while 65 percent of Republicans opposed it.

“I recently saw a T-shirt that perfectly sums up my feeling on all of this going on between the Republicans and the Democrats,” said Joy Rabin, of Sunnyvale. “It read, ‘We the people ... are pissed.’ We need a policy on this issue, but until something is actually done, I’m like most Americans — kind of pissed at everybody.” *Contact David E. Early at 408-920-5836.*

“I feel relieved, grateful to be in a state that recognizes the rights of children regardless of where they are from.”

— *Sebastian Zavala, Catholic Charities of the East Bay*

### **San Jose Mercury News**

09/03/14

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By David E. Early, [dearly@mercurynews.com](mailto:dearly@mercurynews.com)

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## **The Brownsville Herald**

08/30/14

### **Border Patrol agent fires at armed militia member in Brownsville**

BROWNSVILLE (AP) — A Border Patrol agent pursuing a group of immigrants in a wooded area near the Texas-Mexico border on Friday fired several shots at an armed man who later identified himself as a militia member.

Border Patrol spokesman Omar Zamora said agents had been chasing a group of immigrants east of Brownsville Friday afternoon when an agent saw a man holding a gun near the Rio Grande. The agent fired four shots, but did not hit the man. The man then dropped his gun and identified himself as a member of a militia. Zamora said no other details were immediately available.

Cameron County Sheriff Omar Lucio, whose agency is involved in the investigation, said the incident occurred on private property and it appeared the man had permission to be there. He was not arrested, Lucio said.

The man, whose name has not been released, was wearing camouflage and carrying a long arm that was either a rifle or shotgun, Lucio said. The agent had lost the group of immigrants when he turned around and saw the man holding the weapon.

An unknown number of militia members have come to the Texas border following a surge in illegal immigration this summer.

But Lucio said, "We really don't need the militia here." He recognized they have the right to carry weapons, but noted that with the Border Patrol, Texas Department of Public Safety and local law enforcement, there are enough agencies working to secure the border. Gov. Rick Perry also called as many as 1,000 National Guard members to the border.

"It just creates a problem from my point of view, because we don't know who they are," Lucio said.

This month, the Border Patrol warned its agents about militia members after seven of them dressed in camouflage and carrying rifles appeared out of the dark and began helping to apprehend immigrants around a canal near Mission. The agents initially mistook them for a Department of Public Safety tactical team.

### **The Brownsville Herald**

08/29/14

#### **El Salvador opens consulate in the Valley**

McALLEN (AP) — A Texas border city at the center of the immigration surge has welcomed its fourth foreign diplomatic office.

The government of El Salvador inaugurated its new consulate in McAllen on Friday. It joins Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico in the city.

From October to July, 63,000 unaccompanied children were arrested after entering the U.S. illegally, double the number from the same period a year earlier. Another 63,000 families — mothers or fathers with young children — were arrested during that October-to-July period. Children from El Salvador accounted for about a quarter of those unaccompanied children.

Those arrests have slowed, however. Arrests of children traveling alone and children and parents traveling together dropped by about half in July from the previous month and the downward trend appears to have continued in August.

### **Associated Press**

08/27/14

#### **San Francisco to help fund immigration attorneys**

By TERRY COLLINS, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — San Francisco will become the first city in California to provide funding to help immigrants facing deportation obtain an attorney, officials announced Wednesday.

The city's \$100,000 will go to the nonprofit Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, which will use it to provide free legal representation for immigrants living in the country illegally, said Supervisor David Chiu, who created the program. The legal services could total in the millions of dollars, he said.

The initiative is an expansion of the city's Right to Civil Counsel program that had focused on tenants facing evictions, said Chiu, adding that legal support for children and families fleeing escalating violence in Central America is crucial.

San Francisco has long had a "Sanctuary City" law, which aims to provide refuge for illegal immigrants, he said.

"We needed to do something. In San Francisco, we are a city that has always stood up for and known that our immigrant families make us successful as a city and as a country," said Chiu, the son of Taiwanese immigrants. "Ensuring 'liberty and justice for all' is what this city is all about."

New York City has a similar program, and California Gov. Jerry Brown and other state officials recently announced a proposal to provide \$3 million to immigration attorneys.

"Bolstering legal services is a critical next step to continuing support for this vulnerable population, to ensure they are treated with compassion and respect here," Mayor Ed Lee said in a statement Wednesday.

Since January, nearly 200 children in San Francisco who entered the country unaccompanied by an adult now have adult sponsors and cases pending in immigration court, the U.S. Health and Human Services Department reported.

Advocates believe there are hundreds more children who have sought refuge in the city without a sponsor, officials added.

The U.S. Justice Department has ordered immigration courts to make cases involving unaccompanied minors entering the country a priority. California has the largest backlog of immigration court cases, followed by Texas and New York, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University.

President Barack Obama announced that he would act on his own to address whatever immigration issues he can while immigration legislation stalls in Congress.

Republicans have been swift to decry previous administrative actions on immigration, including Obama's decision in 2012 to create the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which allows many young immigrants to avoid deportation and get a work permit for two years.

## **The Brownsville Herald**

08/27/14

### **Judge denies restraining order in immigration case**

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — A federal judge in Texas denied Wednesday a conservative activist's request for an emergency stay to stop the government from transporting immigrants who entered the country illegally in South Texas to other states or releasing them on their own recognizance.

In a complaint filed in July, Orly Taitz argued that by sending immigrant children and families to various states while South Texas was overwhelmed by an immigration surge, the U.S. government created a public health risk. She called for a two-month quarantine and medical screening for all immigrants detained after entering the country.

U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen on Wednesday told the dentist and lawyer from Rancho Santa Margarita, California, that she could refile an amended complaint. He said he was denying her request for an emergency stay because he was not convinced the lawsuit would succeed with Taitz as the plaintiff.

"The only way I see this going forward beyond this next step is that you're going to have some expert support for your damages," Hanen said.

Taitz said that she participates in several programs that provide dental care to new immigrants. She said many of them came in with a persistent cough and she subsequently developed an upper respiratory infection. She also said Border Patrol agents were infected with scabies and chicken pox while handling immigrants.

Taitz is best known as a proponent of the debunked "birther" movement that questions whether President Barack Obama was born in the United States.

The government had sought to have the lawsuit dismissed and indicated Wednesday it would continue to do so. In a court filing, the government called the lawsuit "nothing more than a generalized grievance" and noted that the federal government has broad power in the area of immigration.

From October to July, 63,000 unaccompanied children were arrested after entering the U.S. illegally, double the number from the same period a year earlier. Another 63,000 families — mothers or fathers with young children — were arrested during that period.

Those arrests have slowed, however. Arrests of children traveling alone and children and parents traveling together dropped by about half in July from the previous month.

Law requires unaccompanied children be transferred from Border Patrol custody to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement within 72 hours of their arrest. During the surge, Border Patrol stations were clogged with children, forcing the agency to transfer some immigrants from the Rio Grande Valley to other sectors along the Southwest border. Some families were released with orders to appear later before immigration officials.

In Hanen, Taitz found a judge who had voiced his own criticisms of the government's willingness to reunite children who entered the country alone with parents already residing in the U.S. illegally. In an order issued in another case in December, Hanen wrote that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is assisting in criminal conspiracies to smuggle children into the country by doing so.

It was Hanen who asked some of the most pointed questions of the representatives from the federal agencies most directly involved in handling the increase in immigrant children and families during the hearing Wednesday.

Representatives of the Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Office of Refugee Resettlement each testified about the medical screenings that immigrants undergo.

Kevin Oaks, the Border Patrol's chief of the Rio Grande Valley sector, conceded that some immigrants with scabies had been transferred to other states but maintained that the agency's screening was effective. Teresa Brooks, who oversees the Office of Refugee Resettlement's operations in the Rio Grande Valley, said she knew of only one case in which a child tested positive for tuberculosis during the immigration surge.

Hanen gave Taitz until Sept. 12 to file an amended complaint.

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## **The Brownsville Herald**

08/26/14

### **Border Patrol agents subpoenaed**

By EMMA PEREZ-TREVIÑO Staff Writer

BROWNSVILLE — U.S. District Judge Andrew S. Hanen issued subpoenas for four California-based Border Patrol agents so they can testify at today's federal court hearing on a challenge to U.S. immigration policies.

California attorney Orly Taitz filed the motion for the agents' testimony in support of a lawsuit she has filed seeking quarantine or deportation of undocumented immigrants.

In an order signed Monday, Hanen stated that it had been represented to him that none of the agents objects to attending the hearing although it is not within 100 miles of where they reside, work or do business as federal rules limit.

The subpoenas were issued for James Harlan, union president of Local 1613 of the National Border Patrol Council, and other union representatives Gabriel Pacheco, Chris Harris and Ronald Zermeno.

Taitz seeks an emergency stop to the transport of undocumented immigrants to other states, and wants them either immediately deported or held in quarantine for two months because, she says, they spread epidemics of scabies, tuberculosis, measles, whooping cough, swine flu, dengue fever, Ebola virus and lice. She also alleges that they are a threat to national security and safety.

Hanen has said that he would rule on the stay as soon as possible due to the emergency nature of the motion.

Taitz filed a lawsuit on July 14, naming President Barack Obama, secretaries of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, Jeh Johnson and Sylvia Burwell, respectively; and the Rio Grande Valley Sector of U.S. Border Patrol.

The federal government's position is that Taitz has no standing to bring the lawsuit, and disagrees with policy decisions and the government's lawful exercise of discretion in processing undocumented immigrants.

### **San Jose Mercury News**

08/22/14

#### **\$3 million plan unveiled to help child migrants**

By Howard Mintz and David E. Early

SACRAMENTO — As unaccompanied children from Central America continue to flow illegally into California, Gov. Jerry Brown and top Democratic legislators on Thursday unveiled a groundbreaking plan to spend \$3 million to make sure the young migrants get legal help.

The legislation, destined to be approved by the end of the legislative session this month because it requires only a majority vote of the Democratic-controlled Legislature, would provide money to nonprofit legal groups representing the unaccompanied minors.

“Helping these young people navigate our legal system is the decent thing to do,” Brown said. “And it’s consistent with the progressive spirit of California.”

The Golden State is believed to be the first state to respond to the immigration crisis with direct funding for the Central American children, although states such as New York have approved some general funding for legal representation for illegal immigrants.

Immigrants facing deportation are not entitled to court-appointed lawyers in the federal immigration system, which already is dealing with an unprecedented backlog nationwide of asylum and deportation cases.

Unaccompanied minors from Central America, many claiming they’ll be abused or killed if returned to

their home countries, often cannot afford legal help, and the crush of new cases has left a shortage of lawyers to volunteer.

Immigration experts say California's new effort could spell the difference between life and death for some children.

"It seems very timely and very necessary," said Dana Marks, a San Francisco immigration judge and president of the National Association of Immigration Judges.

On Thursday, Republican leaders in Sacramento took no position on the legislation but questioned whether California should be paying for legal aid in the federal immigration system.

"Sadly too many of (the children) made the difficult choice to leave horrific situations in their home countries, even if it meant leaving their families," said Senate Republican leader Bob Huff. "Today's announcement will begin the discussion as to the appropriate role California can and should have."

But critics of the U.S. government's current approach to the border crisis blasted the proposal.

"There are guys in Sacramento who stay up late thinking up new ways to benefit illegal aliens," said Ira Mehlman, spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a group that fights to reduce both legal and illegal immigration. "Why is it the California taxpayers' responsibility to pay for legal services for people who are violating U.S. immigration laws?"

Although the flow has recently slowed, since last October about 63,000 minors have crossed into the U.S. without parents or adult guardians. California alone has seen the arrival of 3,900 children, mostly from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. The youngsters are attempting to escape poverty, drug cartels, political upheaval and high crime rates.

The new California legislation is the latest in a string of bills helping undocumented immigrants that Brown backed in his first term, including legislation that gave them access to college financial aid and allowed them to obtain driver's licenses.

"As the state becomes increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, Democrats have seen the importance of crafting legislation that responds to these changes," said Larry Gerston, a political science professor at San Jose State. And the state Republican Party is trying to rebuild, in part by trying to attract more Latino voters.

Brown's Republican opponent in the upcoming election, Neel Kashkari, "has spent a lot of political energy discussing immigration and his openness to reform," Gerston said. "Is he out of step with Republicans in Sacramento or taking the party in a new direction? We'll know in November."

State Attorney General Kamala Harris, Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg and Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins all strongly backed the measure.

In addition to the funding, the legislation would streamline the guidelines for state courts to grant so-called special immigrant juvenile status to the unaccompanied minors, which accelerates cases once they reach the federal immigration courts. Immigration rights advocates say the reforms could be particularly important given the crush of deportation cases.

“It could be huge,” said Elizabeth Roehm, a staff attorney with the Immigration Center for Women and Children in San Francisco. “These cases often last for years.” *Staff writer Jessica Calefati contributed to this story.*

## Press Release

### **Governor Brown, Attorney General Harris and Legislative Leaders Announce Unaccompanied Minor Legislation**

8-21-2014

SACRAMENTO – Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., Attorney General Kamala D. Harris, Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins and members of the Latino Legislative Caucus today announced legislation to provide legal services to the unaccompanied minors arriving in California from Central America.

“Helping these young people navigate our legal system is the decent thing to do and it’s consistent with the progressive spirit of California,” said Governor Brown.

The legislation provides \$3 million to qualified non-profits to provide legal services for unaccompanied minors. In addition, the legislation eliminates any ambiguity regarding the jurisdiction of the state court to make findings necessary to enable the federal government to grant these minors special immigrant juvenile status. This federal status provides for an expedited naturalization process. The legislation also reinforces the court’s authority to provide interpreters to unaccompanied, undocumented minors.

“These young people have legal rights and responsibilities, but they cannot fully participate in complex immigration proceedings without an attorney,” said Attorney General Harris. “It is critical that these children, many of whom are fleeing extreme violence in Central America, have access to due process and adequate legal representation.”

“These kids face a daunting immigration process and any failures in our justice system that lead to deportation can be a death sentence,” said pro Tem Steinberg. “The systemic challenges addressed by this bill are a direct product of my legal team’s on-the-ground experiences and, without exaggeration, could make the difference between the life and death of a child.”

“With these bills we’re making it clear California wants unaccompanied immigrant children treated as children. We want their well-being ensured, their best interests pursued, and their safety protected,” said Speaker Atkins. “While no longer in the headlines, the humanitarian crisis that has brought so many children to our country continues. While the root causes of this crisis are being addressed, these victimized children deserve to be treated with kindness and justice.”

“I am proud that California is standing up for these children who have faced unimaginable hardships, trekking thousands of dangerous miles to escape a life of violence and poverty,” said Senate President pro Tem-elect Kevin de León. “Our state is setting the example by upholding due process for these minors.”

“The humanitarian crisis at the border involving unaccompanied minors fleeing dangerous circumstances

at home is a serious problem that requires a serious response. Deportation for some of these kids is tantamount to a virtual death sentence,” said Senator Ricardo Lara, chair of the California Latino Legislative Caucus. “That’s why it’s critical that these kids have every opportunity to seek permanent residency, including through the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. We’re clearing up confusion by stating unequivocally that California courts have the authority to review cases involving unaccompanied minors seeking the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.”

“Our country was founded with the principle of due process for everyone and nobody deserves fair treatment in our legal system more than innocent children who are left to fend for themselves in a court of law,” said Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez. “I couldn’t be prouder to see California setting an example that hopefully the rest of the country can follow.”

“The recent surge of unaccompanied minors is an issue that goes beyond the debate of our nation’s flawed immigration system,” said Assemblymember Luis Alejo, vice chair of the California Latino Legislative Caucus. “This is a question of whether or not we ought to take proper care of helpless children with no one to turn to. I applaud the leadership of our state’s highest officials for authorizing \$3 million in emergency legal funds to give these children an effective voice in court and help protect their fundamental human rights.”

During California's Trade and Investment Mission to Mexico in July, the Governor met with Archbishop of Los Angeles José H. Gomez and religious and diplomatic leaders from Mexico and Central America for a wide-ranging discussion on immigration reform and the influx of unaccompanied children migrating to the United States.

In addition, pro Tem Steinberg and a delegation of state lawmakers went on a fact-finding mission to El Salvador and Guatemala, where they met with national leaders to discuss the root causes of a humanitarian challenge that has led to more than 57,000 minors arriving at the U.S. border since October 2013, mostly from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. In July, Speaker Atkins and members of the Latino Legislative Caucus toured Naval Base Ventura County, to review the conditions in which undocumented, unaccompanied children were being housed and to view how the children were responding following their journeys from Central America.

Complete legislative language will be available tomorrow.

###

## **The Brownsville Herald**

08/19/14

### **Honduras foreign minister visits Valley border**

McALLEN (AP) — The foreign minister of Honduras is scheduled to speak in McAllen about steps that country has taken to stem the flow of unaccompanied child immigrants to the United States.

Foreign Minister Mireya Aguero de Corrales was expected to meet with U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar and representatives of the U.S. State Department Tuesday to discuss the current state of illegal immigration.

From October to July, 63,000 unaccompanied children were arrested after entering the U.S. illegally, double the number from the same period a year earlier. Another 63,000 families — mothers or fathers with young children — were arrested during that period.

Those arrests have slowed, however. Arrests of children traveling alone and children and parents traveling together dropped by about half in July from the previous month.

### **San Jose Mercury News**

08/14/14

#### **Santa Clara County continues seeking foster homes for refugee children, but city no longer seeks large facility**

By Carol Rosen, Correspondent

Zoe Lofgren's visit to a detention center at the border last month was a call to arms for local politicians. The city of San Jose decided to work with government agencies to find a large facility to house unaccompanied children from Central America. Santa Clara County took a different approach, seeking host homes to provide a more family oriented setting.

Last month, Mayor Chuck Reed, Councilman Sam Liccardo and Santa Clara County Supervisors Cindy Chavez and Dave Cortese together pledged to find suitable housing for the children. However, in early August, the government told San Jose representatives the situation is now under control.

"Our lobbyist met with representatives from Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency who said that the flow of children has subsided, processing facilities are now adequate and the government is no longer looking for help from local governments," said Jeff Janssen, senior policy adviser for government affairs in Reed's office.

He explained that the vast majority of the children can live with relatives or sponsors in the country until their hearings. The children without sponsors--approximately 7,000 of them--will be housed in federal sites that can care for the children adequately.

Apparently, that's almost good enough for the city, which was seeking a 90,000-square-foot building to house and process the children until their hearings. But it's not good enough for the county.

On Aug. 5, county supervisors voted 4-1 to allow staff to study a program to bring children to host homes here. Staff is working with Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County and the Bill Wilson Center to find foster homes. Supervisor Mike Wasserman was the lone no vote.

"The county has unmet needs. I believe the money necessary to study the program can be better spent," Wasserman said at the meeting.

On Aug. 7, the county held a meeting with supporters including a representative from San Jose who is working with them to provide host homes. The group will continue to look for host homes for unsponsored children, says Bruce Wagstaff, the counties social services director.

"We still feel it's necessary to provide a humane response for those children who are awaiting a home before their hearings," Wagstaff says. "The county is actively involved. We're talking with state and federal officials about housing the kids and continue to recruit host families."

Speakers for the two nonprofits suggested at that meeting that a push for host homes would increase the list of foster homes benefiting the county. After the refugee children's status is determined, the county will have boosted the number of available foster parents for local children--a win-win situation, said Pilar Furlong, director of community resources for the Bill Wilson Center.

"The large detention facilities are not the most humane method for these children awaiting determination of their legal status," said Sparky Harlan, CEO of the Bill Wilson Center. "We want to remove them from these impersonal centers and put them in a home with a family." There's a need, she said, to find foster homes as well as homes for the 8,000 to 10,000 children that enter the country each year.

Harlan noted her organization has applied for a three-year federal grant that would provide funding for the foster families. However, while the requests were due Aug. 5, she doesn't expect to hear from the government before November for funding that would begin in January. She asked that anyone interested in hosting a Central American child contact Debbie Pell at [dpell@bwcmail.org](mailto:dpell@bwcmail.org).

Catholic Charities also continues to pursue its plans to find host families. "We are still moving forward. It's about children. We plan to do what we can for them; they are frightened, alone and need help," said Steve Hicken, director of economic development for the nonprofit.

The group's CEO Greg Kepferle added that people of all faiths and congregations are welcome. There will be a meeting on Aug. 19 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Catholic Charities, 2625 Zanker Road, for all interested foster parents and volunteers.

## **NBC Bay Area**

08/13/14

### **School Districts Brace for Unaccompanied Minors From Central America, Find Funding to Pay for Help**

VIDEO: <http://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/School-Districts-Brace-for-Unaccompanied-Minors-From-Central-America-Find-Funding-to-Pay-for-Help-271073271.html>

By Lisa Fernandez

As the country braces for the influx of students crossing the borders of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and other parts of Central America, school leaders nationwide are preparing themselves to accommodate the inevitable crush of new students who are often ripped from their parents, don't speak English and housed with sponsor families who they don't know.

Nearly 40,000 unaccompanied children have so far entered the United States, [according to the Office of Refugee Settlement](#), which last updated its numbers at the end of July. And under federal law, all children are entitled to a free public education, no matter if they have entered the country legally or not. Many school districts have taken the challenge seriously.

One of those school districts is in Oakland.

The Oakland Unified School District board is set to vote Wednesday night to accept a [\\$45,000 grant from San Francisco's Zellerbach Family Foundation](#), (PDF) to pay for a new position supporters hope might become a national model. The district is also poised to receive [\\$30,000 from the Moraga-based Y&H Soda Foundation](#). (PDF)

The money is for one school year, and would pay for one "Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors" specialist to help these youth who "cross the border alone, without papers or parents," as the school district grant application reads. "They are some of the nation's most vulnerable immigrants," and "make academic achievement extremely difficult for these students."

More than 340 recently arrived immigrant students from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras have enrolled in Oakland schools since last summer, [according to Bay Area News Group](#). At least 150 are known to have crossed the southwest U.S. border unaccompanied by parents or guardians and now await hearings in immigration courts. Some are already known to teachers, but many arrived just a few weeks ago after school let out for the summer. Oakland Unified has 119 schools serving nearly 50,000 students. "The questions for schools is going to be how do we Id the needs of students in a very quick manner so we can provide the necessary resources and of course that comes with cost," said Francisco Negrón, general counsel for the [National School Boards Association](#), noting that what sets these students apart is that they likely have no parents or guardians to help them navigate their math homework and science projects.

Oakland isn't the only school district that's taking a proactive step in addressing new immigrants.

The San Francisco Unified School District said Tuesday it plans to hire another two to three high school teachers this fall to accommodate more than 200 newly arrived Central American students who have already enrolled this year, in addition to 422 who had enrolled last year, according to Bay Area News Group. San Francisco is a "sanctuary city, and San Francisco Unified is a sanctuary school district," Matt Haney, a school board member told the [San Francisco Examiner](#).

In Contra Costa County, the West Contra Costa district is working with Catholic Charities to enroll 64 unaccompanied migrant students from Central America in adult education programs, some elementary schools and Kennedy and Richmond high schools. The high schools offer health and dental clinics, mental health counselors and connections with social services agencies and nonprofit groups, district spokesman Marcus Walton told the news agency.

The number of children illegally crossing the border began tapering down in July, but more than 62,000 arrived unaccompanied since October, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Nearly 4,300 children have been placed in Texas while their immigration cases are heard. More than 3,000 are in each of New York, Florida and California, and 2,200 in each of Virginia and Maryland. See the full [breakdown of numbers, state by state, here](#).

*NBC Universal's Jennifer Vasquez contributed to this report.*

**USA Today**

08/13/14

**Now hiring: School consultant for unaccompanied immigrant students**

A California school district is hiring an unaccompanied minors consultant to work with the unprecedented number of immigrant children arriving from Central America in the past year.

Oakland Unified School District posted a job opening this month for a "support services consultant" to help unaccompanied immigrant students find legal help, as well as counseling, health and educational services.

These students need extra assistance finding services because they don't have refugee status that would give them access to a social worker, food stamps or Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program, said Carmelita Reyes, principal at Oakland International High School.

"In the same way there are school specialists who deal with foster youth or refugees, we need a specialist who tracks these kids," Reyes said.

San Francisco is also "exploring" a similar position to serve unaccompanied immigrant children, said Christina Wong, special assistant to the superintendent at San Francisco Unified School District.

Since last fall, as many as 50,000 unaccompanied children from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras have come to the USA, according to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The number of unaccompanied minors represents a small fraction of the overall U.S. student population — about one-tenth of 1% of the 50.1 million public school students, according to 2013 Department of Education figures.

But in districts like Oakland, the effects can be felt more deeply, especially at certain schools where unaccompanied minor students are concentrated.

Oakland's school district, which has 37,000 K-12 students, enrolled 150 unaccompanied students since June 2013. Fifty are enrolled at Oakland International High School, representing one-eighth of the population at that school, said Nate Dunstan, a specialist with the school district's Refugee and Asylum Program.

The first step for the consultant would be to help unaccompanied immigrant students find legal help. A number of organizations in the Bay Area offer services for free or on a sliding scale, but oftentimes the students and their sponsors don't know about these services, Dunstan said.

"We found a lot of students with an older sibling that can barely take care of themselves, let alone a couple of younger siblings," Dunstan said.

In the meantime, school administrators and teachers have taken on this consulting role.

"We are trying to help, but honestly, that's not our job," Reyes said.

Oakland International High School is part of the International Network for Public Schools, 17 high schools in California, New York and Virginia that serve immigrant newcomers.

The organization's executive director, Claire Sylvan, said schools are a natural place to connect immigrant students with services in the broader community.

"Handing a kid a piece of paper may not result in them going somewhere," Sylvan said.

Oakland's school district aims to hire someone by mid-September. The consultant will have to first prioritize the students who will age out of the school system or face upcoming court dates.

The position, funded through foundation grants, is for one year, but many of the upcoming hearings are not scheduled until 2015, Dunstan said.

"It's hard to imagine, with the number of kids arriving now, that the need (for this position) will go away within one year," Dunstan said.

*Follow [@JolieLeeDC](#) on Twitter.*

## **San Jose Mercury News**

08/13/14

### **For border kids, Bay Area offers soft place to land**

#### **Facing complicated legal situations, hundreds are enrolled in local schools**

By Matt O'Brien, [mattobrien@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:mattobrien@bayareanewsgroup.com)

OAKLAND — Three months after President Barack Obama declared their mass arrival an “urgent humanitarian situation,” thousands of children who fled Central America are about to take a seat in U.S. classrooms for the first time.

Some Bay Area schools are bracing for an influx. Others don't know what to expect or haven't thought about it. The Oakland Unified School District, more prepared than most, is anticipating so many newcomers that it is hiring a privately funded consultant to cushion their landing.

“Moving anywhere is one of the most stressful things any kid can do. Compound that with moving countries, moving cultures,” said Carmelita Reyes, co-principal of Oakland International High School.

“It’s the most stressful situation. And you’re 15. It’s incredibly hard.”

Many are landing in cities that already had a large Central American community, such as Oakland, San Francisco, Richmond, Concord and Redwood City.

More than 340 recently arrived immigrant students from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras have enrolled in Oakland schools since last summer. At least 150 are known to have crossed the southwest U.S. border, unaccompanied by parents or guardians, and now await hearings in immigration courts. Some are already known to teachers, but many arrived just a few weeks ago after school let out for the summer.

Reyes is accustomed to helping high school students navigate a new world. Her school in North Oakland’s Temescal neighborhood educates immigrant students from around the globe.

### **Many complications**

But the newly arrived Central American students, along with confronting the challenges of learning English and overcoming trauma, have additional difficulties that most newcomers do not encounter.

“Imagine being 15 and being told you need a lawyer, in a country where you don’t speak the language and have no money,” Reyes said. Teachers say legal complications are one of the biggest distractions for the new students, most of whom are in deportation proceedings but seeking asylum or other permanent protection after fleeing violence in their home countries. Unlike indigent criminal defendants, they don’t qualify for free legal representation. And unlike legally recognized refugees, who are paired with case workers, they may not qualify for health care, welfare benefits or other federal help.

Compounding these difficulties are precarious living conditions in which some students feel that they “are being a burden on the household,” Reyes said. The federal government, after detaining the children at the border, has kept some in youth shelters but released most to relatives or family friends. Often the relative is a parent, but Reyes said sometimes it’s a distant relative or even an adult brother or sister.

“If a kid gets in trouble, and you call home, you’re talking to a 19-year-old,” Reyes said. “A lot of 19-year-olds are not in an economic or social situation to take care of a minor.”

A group of educators at Oakland International High appealed for help this summer after the school took in about 50 unaccompanied migrant teenagers in the past year, about an eighth of the school’s population. Many of those students returned for a summer session that ended on Aug. 1.

Fremont High School in East Oakland also enrolled a large group of Central American students, as did Bret Harte Middle School.

“Students who were unaccompanied were missing class and not performing as well,” said Nate Dunstan, the school district’s point-person for refugee students. “They were so preoccupied with the other things going on in their life, primarily legal stuff, but also health and mental health.” Oakland’s Board of Education is expected to vote Wednesday evening to accept \$45,000 from the San Francisco-based Zellerbach Family Foundation and \$30,000 from the Moraga-based Y&H Soda Foundation. The money will be used to hire an “unaccompanied minor specialist” and provide related services to track down the students and monitor how they are adjusting. The San Francisco Unified School District said Tuesday it

plans to hire another two to three high school teachers this fall to accommodate more than 200 newly arrived Central American students who have already enrolled this year, in addition to 422 who had enrolled last year.

### **Health services**

In Contra Costa County, the West Contra Costa district is working with Catholic Charities to enroll 64 unaccompanied migrant students from Central America in adult education programs, some elementary schools and Kennedy and Richmond high schools. The high schools offer health and dental clinics, mental health counselors and connections with social services agencies and nonprofit groups, said district spokesman Marcus Walton.

Jeanne Alessandra Duarte, director of English Learner Services at the Mt. Diablo school district, said 19 new Spanish-speaking immigrants have so far enrolled in district middle and high schools. Although the district could not say specifically which countries they are from, in general, she said, the district has seen an influx in students from El Salvador since January, mainly 15- to 17-year-old males.

“It’s obvious that they were coming from a war-torn country, in terms of what we’re hearing now in the news,” she said. “We didn’t know why there was such a large number, but now it makes sense.”

The district provides services to some unaccompanied migrant students through its homeless outreach program, said Administrator James Wogan. The program provides free school meals and helps students find food, clothing, shelter and access to health and dental care.

Wogan said most of the students have someone helping them get to school.

“To make it this far north, often they’ve had some adult, agency or other person involved in helping them to find their way here and they’re coming for some stability in their lives,” he said.

The number of children illegally crossing the border began tapering down in July, but more than 62,000 arrived unaccompanied since October, according to government data. California has taken in more than 3,900 since January, the third-largest group after Texas and New York. *Staff writer Theresa Harrington contributed to this report.*

### **NBC Bay Area**

08/13/14

#### **School Districts Brace for Unaccompanied Minors From Central America, Find Funding to Pay for Help**

VIDEO: <http://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/School-Districts-Brace-for-Unaccompanied-Minors-From-Central-America-Find-Funding-to-Pay-for-Help-271073271.html>

By Lisa Fernandez

As the country braces for the influx of students crossing the borders of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and other parts of Central America, school leaders nationwide are preparing themselves to accommodate

the inevitable crush of new students who are often ripped from their parents, don't speak English and housed with sponsor families who they don't know.

Nearly 40,000 unaccompanied children have so far entered the United States, [according to the Office of Refugee Settlement](#), which last updated its numbers at the end of July. And under federal law, all children are entitled to a free public education, no matter if they have entered the country legally or not. Many school districts have taken the challenge seriously.

One of those school districts is in Oakland.

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The money is for one school year, and would pay for one "Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors" specialist to help these youth who "cross the border alone, without papers or parents," as the school district grant application reads. "They are some of the nation's most vulnerable immigrants," and "make academic achievement extremely difficult for these students."

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*NBC Universal's Jennifer Vasquez contributed to this report.*

**CBS SF Bay Area**

08/12/14

**Santa Clara Co. Supervisor Calls For More Legal Representation For Children In Need Of Immigration Services**

AUDIO: <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2014/08/12/santa-clara-co-supervisor-calls-for-more-legal-representation-for-children-in-need-of-immigration-services/>

By Mike Colgan

SANTA CLARA COUNTY (KCBS)— With so many immigrant children facing deportation and a lack of legal representation, the call is out in Santa Clara County for not only more lawyers, but for them to do pro-bono work.

At least 1,500 kids are already here in the Bay Area and in need of help said Greg Keperle, CEO of Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County.

“Catholic Charities has been providing immigration legal services for 30 years, Keperle said. While they provide legal assistance, he said they anticipate the volume of immigrants to increase, which will create more of a need for lawyers.

“We’re going to need more attorneys and more, what we call, accredited representatives for the Board of Immigration Appeals,” he said.

Santa Clara County Supervisor Dave Cortese said all the children should have legal representation.

“In this country, no matter where you’re from, you’re entitled to effective assistance of counsel. We think especially if you’re six, seven, or 10-years-old, you shouldn’t be standing before a judge without an attorney, trying to represent your case on your own without parents or anybody else to help you,” Cortese said.

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors has directed county officials to create a program to host kids that are immigrants.

Catholic Charities will hold an informational session for interested lawyers Tuesday, August 19th at 6 p.m.

**San Jose Inside**

08/08/14

**County, Nonprofits Take Steps to Help Children in Border Crisis**

By *Sparky Harlan @SparkyHarlan*

The number of unaccompanied immigrant minors crossing into the United States has increased nearly five times over during the last three years. In the 2012 federal fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2011 – Sept. 30, 2012), the Office of Refugee Resettlement assisted 13,625 children. That number nearly doubled in 2013. Projections for the current fiscal year (2014) estimate 60,000 referrals to ORR by Sept. 30.

The majority of these children come from Guatemala (37 percent), El Salvador (26 percent) and Honduras (30 percent). Only 3 percent are from Mexico. Most are older than 14 and approximately three-quarters of them are boys. Pictures posted on Facebook and Twitter have now become familiar, showing border shelters where young children are kept in kennel-like environments and sleep on cement floors with only Mylar blankets for warmth. We can—and must—do better.

On Tuesday, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to support further exploration of ways to bring some of these unaccompanied immigrant children (UIC) from the border shelters and place them in licensed host homes. I applaud their efforts to help alleviate the crisis. In response to a request by Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, the county executive brought department heads and nonprofit human services agencies together to discuss what we could do at the local level. A modest proposal has been put forward that would bring up to 50 unaccompanied immigrant children from the shelters and place them with host families in Santa Clara County while they await reunification with their families.

Federal law states that UICs must be served “in the least restrictive environment,” and host homes are less restrictive and more family-like compared to detention centers. This is especially important when it comes to younger children, for whom stable, trusting relationships are even more central. Should this proposal be given the green light, the county will seek federal funding to cover the cost of services.

Bill Wilson Center has provided residential care and services for runaway and homeless youth for over 40 years. For the UIC proposal, Bill Wilson Center will recruit new host homes and license them as foster homes. All costs would be paid for by the US Department of Health and Human Services. Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County and Bill Wilson Center have submitted a joint proposal to ORR to request funding for the program.

In addition to housing, children will receive case management services focused on reuniting with family members either here in the US or back in their home country. Each child in the program has the right to a hearing in federal court to determine whether they qualify for refugee status. A more detailed plan will be brought back to the Board of Supervisors for approval later this month. While most of the cost of the program will be borne by the federal government, a modest amount of funding could help begin the process of screening and certifying host home families.

It is important that residents understand that this new program will not affect our current services to runaway and homeless youth. Additionally, recruitment of new host home families may benefit our long-term foster care program. There is always a need for new foster parents.

If you are interested in serving as a host home please email Debbie Pell: [DPell@bwcmail.org](mailto:DPell@bwcmail.org).

Sparky Harlan, Executive Director/CEO at Bill Wilson Center, is a nationally recognized advocate for youth in foster care and in the juvenile justice system, as well as homeless and runaway youth.

### **San Jose Mercury News**

08/06/14

### **Santa Clara County supports helping immigrant kids at border, bans cannabis clubs**

By Eric Kurhi, [ekurhi@mercurynews.com](mailto:ekurhi@mercurynews.com)

SAN JOSE -- Expressing frustration with state and federal governments' lack of guidance on immigration and marijuana, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors moved Tuesday to help house undocumented immigrant kids left stranded at the Mexican border and to ban medical cannabis dispensaries.

The board voted 4-1 to formulate a plan that would temporarily house the immigrant children currently being placed in barracks-like detention centers as they await a court hearing to determine whether or not they have to leave the country.

Supervisor Mike Wasserman, who represents the large southernmost swath of the county, was the sole dissenting vote. He questioned the need for the county's involvement in a federal issue, and agreed with a number of his constituents who spoke out about keeping an altruistic eye closer to home.

"I cannot in good conscience vote to create a new program stretching our resources when we already have so many unmet needs in our county," Wasserman said.

County officials will research ways the county can work with nonprofits such as the Bill Wilson Center and Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, which would place kids temporarily through a "host family" model.

"Part of our objective as political leaders is thinking about the weakest among us, irrespective of their origin," said Supervisor Cindy Chavez. "We all have to live on this planet together."

She added that it is important that involved organizations can demonstrate to concerned citizens that additional activities related to immigrant housing won't hurt existing services.

"I know your heart is in it, but that transparency will be very important going forward," she said.

The supervisors voted unanimously to ban marijuana dispensaries. There were only a handful of possible sites outside city limits where county zoning would have allowed a cannabis collective, and deputy county executive Sylvia Gallegos said those rules, drafted in the late 1990s, are too outdated.

While the board nixed the regulations and enacted a ban, officials insisted that it doesn't mean there can never be a pot club in unincorporated areas governed by the county board. As part of the directive, staff will monitor what happens in San Jose and revisit the matter should the number of dispensaries dip below 10. There are about 70 in San Jose now, but new city regulations are expected to force many to close.

Cannabis advocates in attendance had hoped the county would extend a moratorium instead of stripping the zoning regulations and going with the ban.

"The only way you can control the market is by putting reasonable regulations in place to get a handle on it," said Dave Hodges, owner of the All American Cannabis Club. "Without that, you are empowering drug dealers and creating a black market."

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## **Mountain View Voice**

08/06/14

### **County moves ahead with plan to house border kids**

Vigil held in downtown Mountain View to support Central American children caught at U.S. border

by [Daniel DeBolt](#) / Mountain View Voice

A plan that could allow local residents to house dozens of the Central American children detained at the United States southern border got some preliminary support from the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, while the situation spurred a silent vigil in downtown Mountain View.

Supervisors voted 4-1 to have county administrators iron out a program allowing "host families" to take in the children temporarily. The much-publicized situation of unaccompanied minors attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border spurred 100 members of St. Joseph church to hold a silent vigil in downtown Mountain View on the evening of Friday, August 1.

"A lot of people are pro-life and this is a pro-life issue," said church member and longtime community organizer Sylvia Villasenor. "They do need care and they will need education -- they are children."

It is unclear how many of the children could be helped in Santa Clara County under the "modest" proposal board members supported on August 5, said Supervisor Joe Simitian, Mountain View's

representative on the board, in a phone interview. There could be anywhere from 25 to 100 homes involved, he said.

"I think the honest answer is we don't know yet," Simitian said of how many kids could be helped.

County officials say they don't want to use county funds or take resources away from the foster care system, and expect that federal funding will be available to pay community organizations to do much of the work. Parents of the children would not lose their parental rights, and the children's fate would still be decided in federal immigration courts. County supervisors may approve the "host family program" on August 26, including an effort to line up pro-bono attorneys to represent the children in immigration proceedings.

The program would "help identify and connect (the kids to) host families who have big enough hearts and big enough homes to welcome these kids to Santa Clara County," Simitian said. "(If) the federal government is going to be funding some sort of facility for these youngsters, could those same funds be diverted to host families? They could probably do the job more cost effectively and in a way that's better for the kids involved."

With most fleeing violence in Central America, it is estimated that 90,000 children will attempt to cross the southern U.S. border this year, while 57,000 have reportedly been caught crossing the border since October. As of July, about 30,000 have reportedly been placed in homes around the country, while thousands of other children are being held in warehouses, where Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren says she witnessed hundreds of unaccompanied kids "sleeping on cement floors, dozens of little girls sharing one toilet, with no privacy." She recently called on county officials to help with what she described as a humanitarian crisis.

"We each have a moral obligation to help relieve human suffering," said Supervisor Dave Cortese, the San Jose mayoral candidate who is spearheading the county effort. "Santa Clara County is standing with those communities around the nation who have offered to provide a safe haven for these refugee children who are awaiting federal asylum hearings."

Not everyone praised the effort.

"The kids do need to be cared for and there's really no question about that," said Don Barich of the Tea Party Patriots of Silicon Valley. "This is indeed a humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately it is also a manufactured crisis (created by people) trying to use these children as pawns for a political agenda. They've put those poor children in a difficult position. What's the federal plan for this exactly? What are the feds going to do?"

He questioned the use of county resources to help the kids when "Santa Clara County has highest percentage of food-insecure children in the entire Bay Area."

Board president Mike Wasserman echoed opponents before he voted against the program. "I cannot support the creation of a new program, further stretching our resources, when I know we have so many unmet needs in our community already," he said at the meeting.

"I do believe this is a humanitarian issue, not a political issue," said middle school teacher Andrea Ramos. "Please keep in mind that these children really have left everything behind and they have traveled thousands of miles to get here. That's a journey that shouldn't be taken lightly. I personally would be sincerely honored to help give these children an honorable education and help them feel safe and happy in their homes."

If approved by the board on August 26, county officials say work will begin to place 50 children with host families who would go through a screening and evaluation process. A budget of \$200,000 has been proposed, or \$2,000 to place each child per month, expected to be reimbursed by the federal government.

County officials say they would work with a number of community organizations to implement the program, including the Bill Wilson Center, Unity Care, Catholic Charities, EMQ Families First, Community Health Partnership, Working Partnerships USA, Center for Employment Training (CET) and Services Refugee Rights & Education Network (SIREN).

"The Board of Supervisors has given us the crucial task of working with our community partners to create a program to care for unaccompanied refugee minors," said county executive Jeffrey Smith in a statement. "There are many factors that we will be examining to meet this humanitarian crisis. Our goal is to make sure that our systems and the community are prepared."

## **Palo Alto Online**

08/06/14

### **County to create host-family program for unaccompanied immigrants**

Board of Supervisors votes 4 to 1 to house up to 50 children

by [Elena Kadwany](#)

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday to create a host-family program to house up to 50 unaccompanied immigrant minors -- placing the county in the midst of the national debate over the wave of children and youth, mostly from Central America, who have been illegally crossing the U.S. border in large numbers for the past several years.

The board voted 4 to 1 on the issue, with Board President Mike Wasserman opposing the program due to county resources he said are already stretched thin.

The program will cost an estimated \$200,000 to create, according to the county. The estimated monthly cost to place each child is \$2,000.

County administration is now tasked with returning to the board on Aug. 26 with a full implementation plan for the program, including

- a service model with community partners
- the status of obtaining necessary state and federal approvals and financial commitments
- a plan for recruitment and support for local host families
- logistics for transportation and placement of children in Santa Clara County
- a strategy for helping reunify children with their families, in cooperation with the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement

The board also directed county counsel to explore and report back on efforts to identify pro bono attorneys who can provide legal representation to the children.

The host-family model will be similar to a student-exchange program, according to the county's statement. Volunteer families would be screened and children would be evaluated and placed in homes for support, housing and daily care.

The host-family program will be separate from the current foster care system, according to the county, and does not interfere with or use foster care resources. Unlike the foster-family model, families of these children have not relinquished parental rights and their cases are pending in refugee court rather than juvenile court.

If the board approves the program on Aug. 26, the county will begin preparing to place up to 50 children. The county said that reimbursement is expected from the federal government.

Citing the program's costs, Wasserman maintained his opposition to the program.

"I cannot support the creation of a new program, further stretching our resources, when I know we have so many unmet needs in our community already," he said.

According to the county, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol office estimates that more than 90,000 unaccompanied children will cross into the United States in 2014. This is almost three times the known number in 2013.

Some of those children, who are most often fleeing gang violence and/or unstable family situations, are leaving with the goal of getting to Santa Clara and San Mateo counties to reunify with family members living here, particularly in East Palo Alto, Redwood City and San Mateo, according to Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto attorney Helen Beasley.

Beasley, who focuses on juvenile immigration cases, said she has seen young clients coming to the area from Central America – primarily El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – since 2011, though the numbers have steadily increased since then. (*Read [Local nonprofit aids in Central American immigrant crisis](#)*)

"We each have a moral obligation to help relieve human suffering," Supervisor Dave Cortese said in a statement. "Santa Clara County is standing with those communities around the nation who have offered to provide a safe haven for these refugee children who are awaiting federal asylum hearings."

A 2008 federal anti-trafficking law ensures that unaccompanied immigrant minors caught at the border have a chance to stay in the United States rather than be deported immediately. The William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act guarantees an automatic legal hearing to unaccompanied children who are not from Mexico or Canada and who have crossed the border illegally.

The Act also directs them to be placed under the care of the federal Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which is charged with reuniting the children with U.S.-based family members, if possible. During this process, they are housed in ORR shelters, which are located not just at the border but across the country (including one across the San Francisco Bay in Pleasant Hill, near Walnut Creek).

Santa Clara County's host-family program will be developed in collaboration with local community organizations that currently provide related services, including the Bill Wilson Center, Catholic Charities, EMQ Families First, Community Health Partnership, Center for Employment Training (CET), Working Partnerships USA, Services Refugee Rights & Education Network (SIREN) and Unity Care.

**CBS SF Bay Area**

**Santa Clara County Official Looks To Invite Undocumented Immigrant Children To Silicon Valley**

**July 27, 2014 9:03 PM**

SANTA CLARA (CBS SF) — While some Southwestern communities have seen protests against undocumented immigrant children being placed in their towns, Santa Clara County officials want to invite some of those children to come to the Silicon Valley.

Santa Clara County Supervisor Dave Cortese hopes to bring up to 1,500 undocumented children to the area while they wait for court dates to decide whether they can stay in the U.S. or not.

“We have a strong legacy of figuring out how to do that in Santa Clara County. We’ve dealt with about 100,000 immigrants after the fall of Saigon. We’re able to assimilate people,” he said.

One possibility is an exchange student model using foster homes, and utilizing federal funds that have been promised.

Administrators in the county are talking with non-profit organizations to see what can be done, and planned to return with an official agenda item for the city council August 5th.

**San Jose Mercury News**

07/16/14

**Shelters are little seen, little understood**

**Facilities caring for young Central American refugees take pains to shield privacy**

By Matt O’Brien, [mattobrien@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:mattobrien@bayareanewsgroup.com)

PLEASANT HILL — The shelters that house child migrants fleeing their violent homelands are so hidden that it took a long time before Jim Lorenz realized he saw one every day, across a wood fence and a row of Italian cypress trees.

“They just look like normal kids,” said Lorenz, pastor of the Pleasant Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church. “You would hardly know they were there, it’s that low key of a presence.”

Few of its suburban neighbors take notice of the unmarked 30bed youth shelter where Central American teenagers sleep in bunk beds and learn English in brightly decorated common rooms. A halfhour north, the boys who mingle in the courtyard of a Fairfield group home are invisible to outsiders, except when they take chaperoned outings to a soccer field.

But the secrecy is shifting to curiosity, sympathy, anger and fierce political debate as President Barack Obama asks Congress for \$3.7 billion to respond to a humanitarian crisis, one affecting Bay Area schools and straining San Francisco’s immigration court. More than 57,000 unaccompanied children since October left their homes in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, traveled through Mexico and crossed the southwest U.S. border, looking for refuge.

They are following the footsteps of children who came before, but their rising numbers — more than 300 arriving monthly to the Bay Area alone — have overwhelmed the system built to protect them.

“People are starting to feel it in the Bay Area,” said Lisa Frydman, managing attorney for the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies at UC Hastings School of Law.

The number of Honduran immigrant children attending San Francisco schools more than doubled in the past year. Dozens of newly arrived Guatemalan, Salvadoran and Honduran students also enrolled in Oakland schools in recent months. More are expected in the fall. Both cities have large Central American communities the children are joining.

Organizations from San Jose to Richmond are gearing up to help, though where the children are landing is not always clear.

For years, border agents have caught Central American children smuggled into the country as they sought to escape from gang warfare, cartel recruitment or poverty, or simply tried to reunite with long-lost relatives in the United States. Unlike Mexican children turned back at the border, Central American children get a chance in court to seek asylum or other protection. They are placed in the custody of federal health authorities, who send some to shelters and release many more, at least temporarily, to the care of family members.

“Most are placed with relatives. Some are placed with family friends or people that they don’t really know. Those are the ones we’re most concerned about,” said Nate Dunstan, who works with refugee students at the Oakland Unified School District.

Other children haven’t appeared in local schools because federal officials send them to shelters, including sites in Pleasant Hill and Fairfield, or more secure facilities such as a juvenile detention center north of Davis.

They live there for a month, sometimes as long as a year, as immigration judges decide if they have good reason to stay permanently or must be deported.

“The children we serve in these facilities, like the one in Fairfield, are generally very grateful,” said Krista Piferrer of BCFS Health and Human Services, a Texas-based Baptist organization that runs the Fairfield shelter. “They’re well-behaved and happy to be in a safe place.”

The agency that manages and funds the shelters — the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement — has banned visits by reporters and most others, citing the safety and privacy of the children. But public understanding of how the group homes are run and the children are treated could be increasingly important as the Obama administration seeks \$3.7 billion — about half of it to care for the migrants and expand the patchwork of shelters housing them, and the rest to stem their tide and send many back.

Public records obtained by this newspaper offer a glimpse of how the existing homes are run and what happens when state regulators suspect problems.

California regulators from the Department of Social Services fought to close the Fairfield facility in 2010, arguing that the shelter’s practices of reading mail, monitoring phone calls and hindering movement

violated state laws protecting the rights and privacy of children in group homes.

The home took the case to court, arguing it was merely following the rules imposed by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement. A judge allowed the facility to stay open, letting it work around some of the rules California youth shelters must follow.

The Pleasant Hill facility, run by another Texas group, Southwest Key Program, passed its most recent state inspection in February. It has been touted as a model facility, fielding VIP visits from high-ranking federal officials and Sweden's Princess Madeleine. But its record is not spotless.

The state dinged the shelter in 2011 for abandoning a child inside a van and in 2009 for several safety violations, including medicine left too accessible to children. In 2008, a girl accused an employee of kissing her. Staff members adamantly denied that it happened, and state investigators deemed the case "inconclusive" and closed it for lack of evidence.

For some Bay Area immigrants, the nightly TV news scenes of packed border facilities jog painful memories of their own flight to the United States.

"I went through this exact same situation 10 years ago," said Mirna Henriquez, who was 15 when an aunt sent her traveling 1,400 miles alone with her brother Danilo, 6, on a harrowing trip from El Salvador to Texas.

"I still can't explain how terrifying it was," said Henriquez, a student at San Jose State University. "I had an awful lot of fear on the road — fear that someone would hurt, kill or take my little brother."

Like many children today, the siblings were put into a detention center near the border, finger-printed, photographed and registered. But when an immigration court allowed them to stay, they rejoined their mother, who had come to the country two years earlier.

## **Associated Press**

06/19/14

### **Detention centers fill up with immigrant children More than 47,000 entered country illegally this year**

By Christopher Sherman and Astrid Galvan

BROWNSVILLE, Texas — Children's faces pressed against glass. Hundreds of young boys and girls covered with aluminum foil-like blankets next to chain link fences topped with barbed wire. The pungent odor that comes with keeping people in close quarters. These were the sights from Wednesday tours of a crowded Border Patrol stations in South Texas and Arizona, where thousands of immigrants are being held before they are transferred to other shelters around the country. It was the first time the media was given access to the facilities since President Barack Obama called the more than 47,000 unaccompanied children who have entered the country illegally this budget year an "urgent humanitarian situation."

Border Patrol stations like the one in Brownsville and Nogales were not meant for long-term custody. Immigrants are supposed to wait there until they are processed and taken to detention centers. But the

surge in children arriving without their parents has overwhelmed the U.S. government.

The surge, which has been building for three years, comes amid a steep overall increase in immigrant arrests in southernmost Texas.

The children are mostly from Central America. They pose a particular challenge because the law requires Customs and Border Protection to transfer them to the Department of Health and Human Services within 72 hours.

That agency's network of some 100 shelters around the country has been over capacity for months and is now caring for more than 7,600 children.

Children began backing up in already overcrowded Border Patrol stations. Eventually, the Border Patrol began flying them to Arizona, where it set up a massive processing center in the border city of Nogales, where reporters were also granted access on Wednesday. From there, the children are sent to private shelters or temporary housing at barracks on military bases in California, Texas and Oklahoma.

But the children at Fort Brown remain in the custody of an agency illequipped to care for them.

On Wednesday, dozens of young boys were divided from dozens of young girls. Mothers with children still younger were in another cell.

Happier faces could be found in a side yard just outside the station. There, young children colored pictures under a camouflage tent.

A group of about a dozen girls of perhaps 5 or 6 sat under another tent outside the shower trailer, dark hair wet and shiny. Women wearing blue gloves combed each girl's hair. Tables held stacks of clean bluejeans, Tshirts and toiletries.

Deeper into the yard, teen girls kicked a soccer ball and tossed a football with workers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

In Nogales, Arizona, girls playing soccer with two male border agents shrieked when their ball crossed over the chain link fence and away from the small recreational area covered by a white tent. Others playing basketball cheered on their teammates.

But inside, the approximately 1,000 children in the clean, 120,000-square-foot warehouse were silent.

In a roomy area with teenage boys, a large, highdefinition TV playing the World Cup went largely ignored.