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CENTRAL ASIA, AND NONPROLIFERATION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2022

The Honorable January Contreras
Assistant Secretary
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
330 C Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Assistant Secretary Contreras:

I write regarding the Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Refugee Resettlement's plans to open an Influx Care Facility in Greensboro, North Carolina. On behalf of my constituents, I request more information about the facility's operational protocols, the potential impact on the local community, the experience at comparable facilities, and the expected timeline.

It is my understanding that the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has leased the American Hebrew Academy (AHA) for the purposes of opening an Influx Care Facility (ICF) in order to house unaccompanied minors, in accordance with ORR's legal obligations, until the children can be reunited with family members or other approved guardians. The American Hebrew Academy previously functioned as a school, but it has remained vacant since the school closed in 2019. According to HHS, ICFs are a temporary measure used when HHS lacks capacity at its standard network of facilities.

North Carolinians in my district support a fair and orderly system of legal immigration that protects our southern border while promoting strong economic, health care, and national security policies. It is imperative to take into consideration the impacts of the new ICF on the Greensboro community and to provide thorough and timely information to them. Thus, I respectfully request your responses to the following questions:

A. Operational Protocols:

1. AHA is a self-contained campus with dormitories, classrooms, and a cafeteria which should allow the children residing there to receive all services on-site. Are there circumstances which would require or allow unaccompanied minors to travel outside of the AHA campus? If so, what are the policies governing travel off-campus?

2. What security procedures will be in place to monitor the facility, e.g. security cameras along the perimeter; regular monitoring of gates, entrances, and exits; coordinating with local law enforcement?
3. ORR has indicated AHA has a capacity of 800 beds for unaccompanied minors. How many children do you expect to reside at the facility and what is the average length of time a child is likely to reside at AHA? What are the ages of the children who will be placed at AHA?
4. What health care protocols are in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases? What policies does ORR follow to provide health services to children in the agency's custody?

B. Impact on Local Community:

1. ORR has reported the facility would generate 800 jobs, including teachers, translators, and health care providers. Can you provide an update on the number of jobs the facility has created? Also please indicate if employees hired to date are from the surrounding community.
2. What efforts has ORR taken to share information with my constituents about job openings and employment opportunities?
3. Given the recent increase in news reporting regarding the facility, members of the local community have raised questions about the impact on the neighborhood and the City of Greensboro. What efforts has ORR undertaken to keep the local community informed about plans to move forward with the ICF? Has ORR allowed members of the local community to provide feedback and express their concerns?

C. Experience at other ORR facilities:

1. How many other ORR facilities are there in the United States? Of these, how many are in residential neighborhoods?
3. Have ORR's other facilities experienced security violations such as unapproved visitors or intruders gaining access to the facility? What is the protocol for addressing security violations?
4. What measures are in place to prevent the children from leaving the facility without approval and supervision? If children have left other facilities without authorization, what actions did the ORR take?
5. Have the other ORR facilities had any negative repercussions on the surrounding communities, e.g. an increase in noise ordinance violations, traffic, or illegal activity resulting from the ICF?

D. Timeline:

1. The original target date for opening was July 9, 2022. Please provide an updated timeline for when children will arrive at the facility.

Your assistance in answering these questions is greatly appreciated. Additionally, as ORR continues to proceed with the process to open this ICF, I request HHS develop a mechanism through which local residents can provide feedback or report concerns directly to ORR, either through a telephone hotline or via a dedicated email address. Strong oversight and transparency will be critical to keeping keep my constituents fully informed.

I look forward to receiving your prompt reply. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Manning". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathy Manning
Member of Congress