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CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS  
119<sup>th</sup> Congress

October 10, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Pam Bondi  
Attorney General of the United States  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Secretary Noem, Secretary Kennedy, and Attorney General Bondi:

As Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, we write to express grave concern over reports that the administration is offering \$2,500 payments to unaccompanied migrant children in exchange for agreeing to “voluntarily” depart the United States.<sup>1</sup> Recently filed litigation shows that the agency simultaneously issued an internal directive instructing immigration agencies to transfer unaccompanied migrant children immediately into indefinite, adult immigration detention upon turning age 18.<sup>2</sup> This directive not only violates a standing court order,<sup>3</sup> but adds to the coercive nature of this financial offer of \$2,500. If accurate, these policies raise serious legal, ethical, and constitutional concerns that demand immediate explanation.

Additional news reports indicated that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) planned to use more coercive tactics with children, including threats to deport their parents if they did not accept the offer to depart, and the possibility children as young as 10 years-old would be approached with these “offers.”<sup>4</sup> These steps would be taken despite

<sup>1</sup> Alvarez, Priscilla. “Unaccompanied Migrant Kids Payments.” *CNN*, 3 Oct. 2025, [www.cnn.com/2025/10/03/politics/unaccompanied-migrant-kids-payments](https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/03/politics/unaccompanied-migrant-kids-payments).

<sup>2</sup> *Ramirez v. U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement. Plaintiffs’ Emergency Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order and to Enforce the Court’s Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction*, No. 1:18-cv-00508-RC, U.S. Dist. Ct. for the District of Columbia, filed Oct. 4, 2025. American Immigration Council, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/413-TRO-and-Motion-to-Enforce-1.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ramirez v. U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement. Order Granting Motion for Temporary Restraining Order and to Enforce Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction*. U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, 4 Oct. 2025. *American Immigration Council*, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/414-TRO-Granted-1.pdf>.

the fact that the government does not guarantee legal counsel for unaccompanied children and that many would be forced to make life or death decisions without counsel.

Federal law, including the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA), establishes clear safeguards to ensure that unaccompanied minors are treated humanely and that any decision to return to their home country is truly voluntary and informed. Offering financial inducements to children in federal custody—many of whom are fleeing violence, trafficking, or persecution—undermines those protections and risks coercing minors into abandoning legitimate legal claims.

The reported use of taxpayer dollars to incentivize “self-deportation” by unaccompanied children represents a profound abuse of power. It erodes public confidence in the integrity of the immigration system and contradicts the values of fairness and decency that define our nation.

Accordingly, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) requests that your departments provide the following information no later than October 27th:

1. Copies of all memoranda, directives, or communications authorizing or describing the full extent of these policies, including any directive instructing that unaccompanied children who “age-out” of Office of Refugee Resettlement custody be transferred to indefinite, adult detention;
2. The statutory or regulatory authority relied upon to provide financial incentives for voluntary departure;
3. Any new memos or policies that eliminate the “firewall” that has existed for years between HHS’s Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the Department of Homeland Security;
4. Data on the number of unaccompanied minors offered, accepted, or declined these payments, disaggregated by age, gender, and country of origin;
5. What child welfare experts were involved in the development and execution of this plan? Please provide evidence of their expertise and credentials;
6. Documentation of the processes used to determine voluntariness and informed consent;
7. How will the plan prevent abuse or trafficking of children returning to their home country?
8. A list of any contractors, NGOs, or third parties involved in implementing or communicating this program;
9. Identification of the funding source(s) for these payments and any related contracts or appropriations; and
10. Please provide specific details on how funding would be safely provided to the children in their home country.

The CHC will continue to exercise its full oversight authority to ensure that federal agencies act within the bounds of the law and uphold the humanitarian standards the United States is obligated to maintain. Coercing children into forfeiting their rights is not immigration enforcement — it is state-sanctioned exploitation.

We expect your prompt response and full cooperation.

Sincerely,

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<sup>4</sup> Valdez, Jonah. “The ICE Children Deportation Payment.” *The Intercept*, 3 Oct. 2025, [theintercept.com/2025/10/03/ice-children-deportation-payment/](https://theintercept.com/2025/10/03/ice-children-deportation-payment/).



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Adriano Espaillat  
Chair  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus




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Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



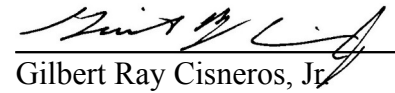
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



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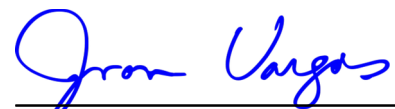
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Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



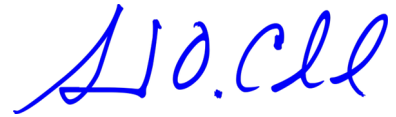
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Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



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Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress



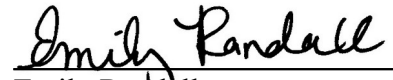
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Salud Carbajal  
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Jim Costa  
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Emily Randall  
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Andrea Salinas  
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Robert J. Menendez  
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Nellie Pou  
Member of Congress



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Pablo José Hernández  
Member of Congress



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Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



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Norma J. Torres  
Vice Chair of Communications  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus