

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2026

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Angie Salazar
Acting Director
Office of Refugee Resettlement
330 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Acting Director Salazar,

This past July, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) terminated its contract with the Acacia Center for Justice to provide legal services to unaccompanied minors in ORR care. On August 6, the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, and ORR announced plans to award up to \$150 million to Burke Law Group to provide legal services for unaccompanied children. Almost simultaneously, ORR issued a \$158 million no-bid legal services contract for up to five years to Our Rescue for the same purpose. Burke Law Group and Our Rescue lack experience, proficiency, and capacity to appropriately implement essential legal services to thousands of unaccompanied children. We are gravely concerned that ORR would entrust a vulnerable population with firms so plainly unqualified for the task. We urge ORR to find the best organizations to handle this contract through a competitive, public process.

On August 11, Burke Law Group withdrew from grant and contract consideration. The withdrawal underscores our concerns with how your agency is handling these contracts and award process. These children are a uniquely vulnerable population whose needs and case complexities require highly specialized expertise.

ORR's standing contract with Our Rescue is especially concerning and places unaccompanied children at risk of unqualified legal representation. Under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, ORR is required to provide confidential and qualified legal consultation to unaccompanied children. However, Our Rescue does not list legal services among its primary functions, and it is unlikely to have the needed infrastructure and legal expertise to properly provide legal representation for thousands of children across the country. Public reporting has raised serious concerns about Our Rescue's leadership, including the founder's resignation following sexual misconduct allegations in 2023. If ORR proceeds with this contract, ORR will be gambling with the legal fate of thousands of children on an organization that has not clearly demonstrated it can do this work.

We also fear that Our Rescue may provide confidential information about unaccompanied children and their cases to ORR – information that could not only violate attorney-client privilege but could also be shared with Immigration and Customs Enforcement for immigration enforcement purposes. This is precisely the type of sensitive information that ORR has illegally demanded in exchange for reimbursing legal services providers under the recent expired legal services contract. A recent Reuters article indicated that DHS has arrested more than 12,000 individuals, including unaccompanied children and their loved ones, pursuant to ORR information-sharing with the Department.¹

¹ Kristina Cooke, "Exclusive: Thousands of Children, Sponsors Arrested by ICE After Tips from US Child Migrant Agency," Reuters, July 28, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/thousands-children-sponsors-arrested-by-ice-after-tips-us-child-migrant-agency-2026-07-28/>.

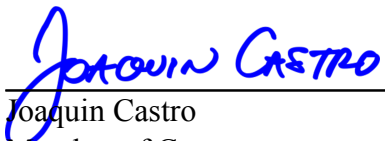
The Trump administration has made a practice of issuing awards based on politics and cronyism rather than in the public interest. We are not surprised that leadership in both Burke Law Group and Our Rescue includes individuals who previously served in various roles during the first Trump administration. Derek Benner, the current CEO of Our Rescue, previously served as the Executive Associate Director for Homeland Security Investigations during the first Trump administration. Children's legal protections should never be the currency of political patronage.

Our Rescue clearly does not have a substantial track record of delivering such expertise on a large scale, managing high-dollar federal cooperative agreements, or maintaining the nationwide footprint necessary to serve children at ORR shelters throughout the country.

Given our concerns, we ask you to provide answers to the following questions **by October 12, 2026**.

1. Please provide evidence that Our Rescue and other groups ORR is considering has the expertise and capacity to timely and appropriately administer this contract.
2. Please describe Our Rescue and the federal government's plan to administer this contract.
 - a. What partners, if any, will Our Rescue rely upon to administer these legal services, including through subcontracts?
 - b. At what locations nationwide is Our Rescue or its partner network prepared to implement legal services beginning on August 15th?
 - c. To what extent does Our Rescue intend to provide legal services under the agreement virtually versus in person?
3. In the course of implementing this agreement, what information will Our Rescue be required to and/or intend to share with ORR and/or other federal government agencies concerning unaccompanied children and their cases? Please provide any analysis regarding whether such information-sharing violates relevant bar/professional conduct provisions.
4. Does ORR have a plan to provide any additional awards or contracts, including but not limited to a transition contract for children served under the Acacia contract or a separate contract focused on legal services for children released from ORR care? If the agency enters into a transition contract, does ORR envision Acacia-funded cases to transition to Our Rescue or another entity?

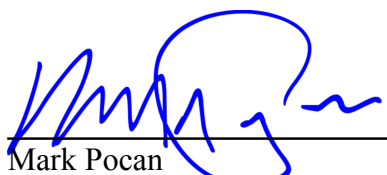
Sincerely,



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



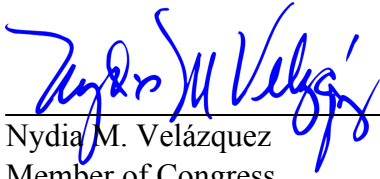
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



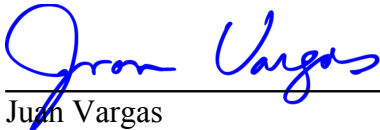
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



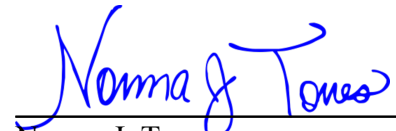
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



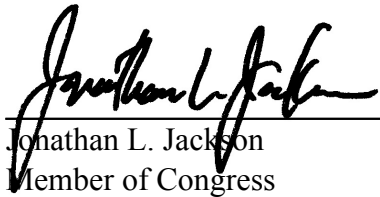
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



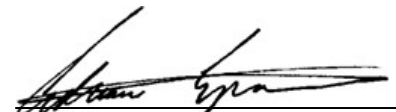
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



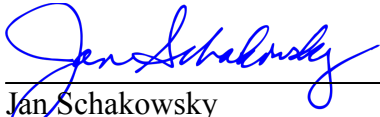
Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



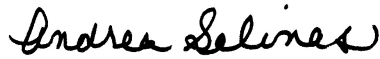
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



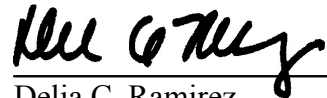
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress



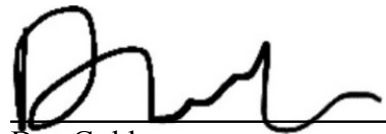
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



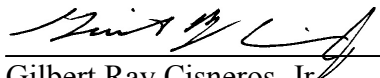
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



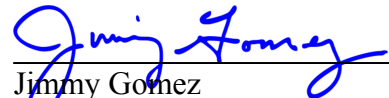
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Pablo José Hernández
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



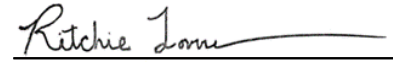
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



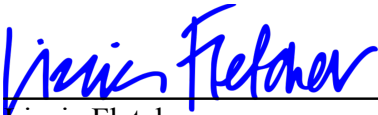
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



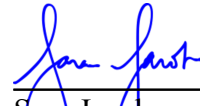
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



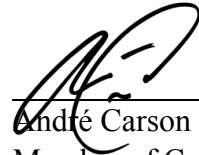
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



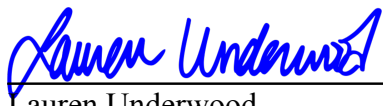
André Carson
Member of Congress



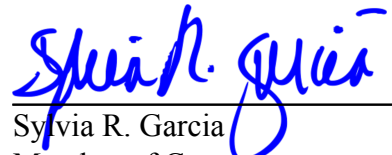
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



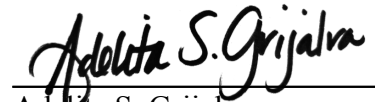
Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



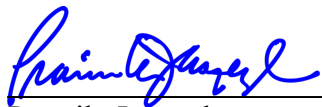
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Adenta S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



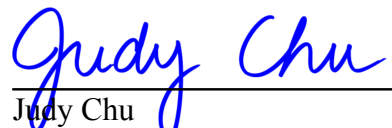
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



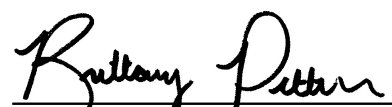
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



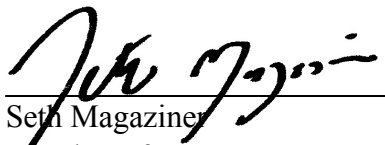
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



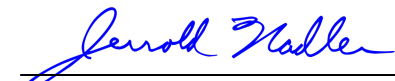
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Brittany Petersen
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress