



August 14, 2019

Dear President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Acting Secretary McAleenan:

As law enforcement leaders dedicated to preserving the safety and security of our communities, we write to express our concern about the reports of possible unacceptable conditions for children in the custody of the federal government.

We are members of the Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force (LEITF), a group of police chiefs, sheriffs, and other law enforcement leaders from around the country committed to promoting safe communities and respect for the rule of law, who support broad immigration reform.

We appreciate the service that DHS frontline personnel are providing to the nation and recognize that they are facing a challenging situation with a surge of families and children crossing the border. We also recognize that our current immigration system is broken. It is our hope that with the additional funding recently authorized by Congress, migrant children will be provided the appropriate care; and if they are not, those federal contractors and employees responsible should be held accountable. Law enforcement officers lose legitimacy when we are called upon to enforce standards of care that even our government agencies cannot meet.

Recognizing that trust and legitimacy are central components of effective policing, we urge the Trump Administration to 1) minimize the detention of children and use effective alternatives to detention except when an individual presents a threat to public safety, and 2) invest in the trained personnel and facilities necessary to process and properly care for children and their families. As a trauma-informed approach, we urge that rather than detaining children at taxpayer expense, thoroughly vetted minors should be released to sponsoring relatives and friends throughout the U.S., or properly vetted local churches and non-profit organizations. We urge that facilities that hold children should meet all established state and federal standards for the care of children, and include safe and clean conditions with adequate educational and recreational opportunities.

We share your commitment to an approach to immigration that prioritizes legality and accountability, restores respect for the rule of law, and creates safe communities. We stand ready to help in these necessary reforms, and submit that the recommendations urged here reflect a solid step towards this commitment.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Margaret Mims, *LEITF Co-Chair*  
Fresno County, CA

Chief Art Acevedo, *LEITF Co-Chair*  
Houston, TX

Chief Carmen Best, *LEITF Co-Chair*  
Seattle, WA

Executive Director Dwayne Crawford  
National Organization of Black Law  
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Lt. Andy Norris, Retired  
Tuscaloosa, AL



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