



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Shevaun L. Harris
Secretary

May 14, 2024

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Florida Congressional Delegation:

Recent reports from Florida's Grand Jury on the Impacts of Illegal Immigration highlight a disturbing finding: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating under the guidance of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) are knowingly placing children in unsafe, unvetted settings and, even worse, are explicitly prohibited from reporting concerns to law enforcement. This undermines the actions being taken under the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis, with Florida dedicating significant resources to combatting human trafficking, protecting children and ultimately guarding against the effects of the failed border policies under the Biden Administration. These efforts include petitioning the Florida Supreme Court to impanel a grand jury to investigate the impact of the border crisis on Floridians, including the dangerous practice of transporting unaccompanied children into the state.

Florida's Grand Jury on the Impacts of Illegal Immigration findings to date have been alarming and have uncovered practices sanctioned by the federal government that indirectly facilitate the human trafficking of unaccompanied children crossing the border. Our open southern border invites human trafficking and jurisdictions around the country that do not uphold the law embolden traffickers and other criminals to act without fear or penalty.

These NGOs fund and operationalize the flow of illegal immigration into the United States through various programs authorized by the federal government using tax-payer dollars. Once these illegal immigrants have entered the country, the NGOs are providing government-sanctioned welfare services and resources to these individuals. Further, Florida's Grand Jury on the Impacts of Illegal Immigration report (<https://myflfamilies.com/grandjuryreport>) indicated that enough fentanyl has been seized at the southern border to kill not just the population of Florida but our entire nation. Recent reporting also shows that these NGOs are potentially making billions off of the unchecked flow of vulnerable children. These findings cannot be ignored.

As an agency charged with protecting the most vulnerable in our state, our children, I am writing this letter to ask for your help. I implore you to read Florida's Grand Jury on the Impacts of Illegal Immigration report to see the criminal and dangerous actions our federal government has allowed and encouraged. We have little faith that the leaders in the Biden Administration will do anything to address this on their own. However, you have the power and authority to take action to hold ORR and any contributing provider accountable by making them address these findings.

Yesterday, I joined the Governor as he made an announcement to provide \$4.9 million to significantly expand access to emergency beds for human trafficking survivors and provide additional staff to continue to increase our human trafficking prevention efforts along with a new \$900,000 grant opportunity through the Department of Children and Families to enhance staffing and training for law enforcement departments combatting human trafficking in Florida. Again, Florida will continue to take action, but I implore you as a member of the Florida Congressional Delegation to hold ORR and their contractors accountable to protect these vulnerable children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shevaun".

Shevaun L. Harris
Secretary

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency