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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY

RANKING MEMBER,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CYBERSECURITY,
INFRASTRUCTURE
PROTECTION, AND INNOVATION

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

June 10, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

President Biden,

I write to follow up on the two letters I sent to you on October 19, 2021, and December 7, 2021, and to reiterate my grave concern with the lack of transparency from your administration about the relocation of unaccompanied minors from the U.S. southern border to New York. Specifically, I raised concerns about the transfer of unaccompanied minors to MercyFirst children's shelter on Long Island and subsequent reports of violence stemming from residents of the shelter. Almost 8 months have passed since my initial letter, and 6 months since my second letter, and I have yet to receive a response from your administration. Now, additional acts of crime and violence are surfacing, and I remain troubled by the potential security and health risks that these undocumented migrants pose to my constituents. I am once again demanding transparency about the placement of migrants on Long Island.

In October, I wrote to you regarding reports that your administration is flying unaccompanied minors into New York as a result of the crisis at our southern border.¹ At the time, reports indicated that about 50 minors were transferred to MercyFirst children's shelter in Syosset, NY, and a total of about 2,600 unaccompanied minors had been relocated to Long Island over the past year.² I requested information from your administration about who these people are, what their security vetting and COVID-19 screening status is, and how local resources will be impacted.

In December, I once again wrote to you requesting transparency after an incident at MercyFirst left two law enforcement officers with a concussion and a broken hand.³ This assault on law enforcement is absolutely disgraceful and should not be tolerated. I remain determined to obtain additional information about the perpetrators of this attack, and I introduced legislation to ensure assault of a law enforcement officer is considered a deportable offense moving forward.

Just this week at MercyFirst, five teenagers were charged in connection with burglaries and criminal mischief at more than seven small businesses in Nassau County, NY.⁴ These community businesses have suffered thousands of dollars of damage as a result of the actions of unsupervised minors.

Ongoing media reports highlighting crime and violence surrounding the MercyFirst shelter brings to the forefront the question of whether if unaccompanied migrants relocated there by your administration have

¹ <https://twitter.com/RepGarbarino/status/1450796445796274176>

² Nearly 2,600 unaccompanied migrant youths relocated to LI in past year, officials say: <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/unaccompanied-minors-migrant-youths-syosset-1.50395025>

³ Two Nassau cops hurt in melee at MercyFirst group home in Syosset: https://www.newsday.com/long-island/crime/mercy-first-melee-cops-hurt-1.50441461?utm_source=appshare

⁴ 5 teens charged in Syosset business burglaries, Nassau police say: <https://www.newsday.com/long-island/crime/syosset-business-burglaries-e2kn45eb>

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played a role in creating or exasperating the problem. The tactics you've used to transport migrants in the dead of night and your failure to provide state and local leaders with sufficient security or demographic data and resources has left Long Island communities to suffer the consequences of your misguided immigration policies.

I remain distressed about the safety and security of my constituents, our local law enforcement officers, and our local small business owners. Your weak policies have directly resulted in an increased threat of crime and gang violence on Long Island. Unaccompanied minors are also at high risk for recruitment by gangs like MS-13. If we don't have a clear picture of who these children are and when they are being brought to New York, we can't safeguard them or our community from that eventuality. MS-13 is a scourge in my district and will continue to exploit the cracks in our nation's immigration system and corrupt vulnerable minors unless changes are made. We must secure our border to ensure Americans are safe in their own communities.

I am once again demanding transparency from your administration about the placement of migrants in New York. I request a briefing on what your administration has done thus far with regards to migrant relocation on Long Island, and what you intend to do moving forward in light of these growing concerns about public safety and security in my district and in communities across the United States.

Sincerely,



Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security