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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6200

June 3, 2026

Alex J. Adams
Assistant Secretary for Family Support
Administration for Children & Families
330 C Street SW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20201

Assistant Secretary Adams,

I am concerned about the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) oversight of unaccompanied children in the care and custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). As you know, ACF is the parent agency responsible for ORR's child-welfare mission and for the operational decisions ORR makes about the children entrusted to it.

Recent reports indicate that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and ORR are preparing to use a former military barracks at the Alexandria International Airport as a short-term federal holding facility for families and unaccompanied children before deportation flights.[1] Compass Connections and the LaSalle Family Foundation have been reported to be the entities expected to operate the facility.[2] Project officials told The Guardian in March 2026 that the lease for the Alexandria site was being finalized and the facility could be operational within 60 to 90 days,[3] raising the prospect that children may begin being held at the site as early as June 2026.

I do not believe that the design, implementation, and operation of this Alexandria facility will properly serve the best interests of children in ORR's care. Compass Connections characterized the Alexandria site as a "first-of-its-kind" facility providing "wrap-around services" for individuals in their "final days in the U.S.,"[4] a characterization that, on its face, describes operational support for removal, and a lack of congressionally and statutorily mandated services, rather than the child-welfare mission Congress assigned to ORR and that ACF is responsible for safeguarding. Furthermore, separate accounts have documented elevated levels of per- and

[1] Oliver Laughland, *Trump officials set to expand migrant family detention at Louisiana airport*, THE GUARDIAN (March 14, 2026), https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/14/trump-migrant-detention-louisiana.
[2] *Id.*
[3] *Id.*
[4] *Id.*

polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) "forever chemicals" in drinking water at other detention facilities in the same area and network this Alexandria site is expected to join, including facilities that have housed children.[5] Former military airfields are among the most PFAS-contaminated sites in the country, raising serious questions about the environmental and health suitability of such a site for children. ACF has the authority and the responsibility to refuse to place children in conditions that contravene the agency's own child-welfare standards.

Compounding these concerns is the absence of a public process around this facility. There has been no public announcement by ACF, ORR or DHS. There has been no public licensing process disclosed, limited public notice by the operators to the communities in which children will be held,[6] and no opportunity for the legal service providers, child advocates, or members of Congress responsible for oversight of the Unaccompanied Children Program to engage on the operations and safeguards. A federal facility designed to hold children and families in federal custody cannot be stood up in secrecy. Whatever ACF is preparing to do at Alexandria, the Finance Committee, the public, and the children themselves have a right to know about it.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (TVPRA), the Foundational Rule at 45 C.F.R. Part 410, and ORR's own Policy Guide establish a child-welfare framework under which ACF and ORR are responsible for acting in the best interest of children in its care and for facilitating safe and timely release to vetted sponsors. ORR's posture at the Alexandria facility, and its handling of Category 1 cases more generally, raises serious questions about whether ACF is discharging that responsibility or whether ACF has allowed ORR to be repurposed as an adjunct to immigration enforcement.

Of particular concern is what is happening to Category 1 children, those with a parent or legal guardian sponsor, and the cases ORR's own Policy Guide requires to be adjudicated within ten calendar days of receipt of a sponsor's application. The average length of care across the program has climbed from 37 days in January 2025 to 205 days in April 2026, a more than five-fold increase.[7] Under this administration, a parent or legal guardian comes forward to sponsor their child, and the child waits, not for ten days but for months, while ORR processes paperwork it is required by its own policy to adjudicate swiftly.

What looks like bureaucratic delay is, in practice, a concerted effort to increase deportations. Throughout those months, ORR is sharing case information with DHS, and sponsors who put themselves forward to take their children home are then picked up by DHS at traffic stops, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, and even during post-release welfare checks – federal contacts that exist for the express purpose of supporting children, but are being used to detain and deport the sponsors caring for them. Children are being pressured into accepting

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[5] Tom Perkins, *ICE planning facility for children and families on Pfas-contaminated site*, THE GUARDIAN (Apr. 25, 2026), https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/apr/25/pfas-chemicals-ice-family-detention.

[6] Melinda Martinez, *Alexandria residents question proposed migrant family facility*, THE ALEXANDRIA TOWN TALK (March 31, 2026), https://www.thetowntalk.com/story/news/2026/03/31/proposed-migrant-family-facility-raises-concerns-among-some-residents/89382265007/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epti=z11xx43p116250c116250e004700v11xx43d--xx--b--xx--&gca-ft=145&gca-ds=sophi.

[7] ORR, Data: Average Monthly Data, https://acf.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data (last updated May 13, 2026).

voluntary departure as a result. ACF needs to explain what is governing the delay, what information ORR is sharing with DHS about children and sponsors, and the legal basis for that information sharing.

At the same time, ORR released 185 Category 1 children in April alone, up from 75 in February.[8] Both patterns cannot be true unless ACF has allowed ORR to hold most Category 1 children longer than ever while accelerating selected releases for reasons that align with removal rather than reunification. The March and April 2026 release surges coincide with the buildout of the Alexandria facility. As I told Secretary Kennedy in my recent letter,[9] I am also tracking reports of a pattern of administrative recategorization affecting Category 1 children. Specifically, that unaccompanied-child status is being stripped, along with the statutory protections Congress enacted to protect such status, through de-designation, often in coordination with case information ORR shares with DHS and the U.S. Department of Justice. If that practice exists, by policy or by case-level decision, ACF needs to explain what role it is playing.

I therefore request that you brief me, no later than **June 18, 2026**, on the following:

1. ACF's and ORR's role in the planned Alexandria International Airport facility, including the populations expected to be held there, the basis on which children will be referred to or placed in the facility, and any child-welfare safeguards in place;
2. What is governing Category 1 case management, including (a) the cause of delays in adjudicating Category 1 sponsor applications; (b) any information ORR is sharing with DHS or any other federal agency about Category 1 sponsors or children, including the legal authority for that sharing and any assessment ACF has conducted of how that information is being used in immigration adjudication proceedings; (c) the cause of the March and April 2026 surge of Category 1 releases relative to prior months; and (d) any policy or practice within ACF or ORR of administratively recategorizing Category 1 children as no longer unaccompanied, whether for ORR custody purposes or for purposes of any information ORR transmits;
3. The status of the January 2026 ORR restructuring under the Division of Sponsor Administration, including how legal service providers, child advocates, and sponsors are intended to engage with case decisions under the new structure; and
4. ACF's decision-making and oversight relating to ORR-funded grant recipients who are simultaneously participating in immigration enforcement operations, including the conflict-of-interest framework applicable to such arrangements.

For your awareness, my office is also corresponding with Compass Connections regarding its role at the Alexandria facility. This briefing request is directed to ACF on its own conduct as the parent agency responsible for ORR.

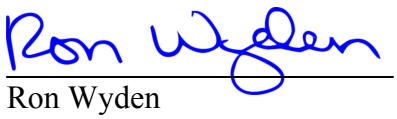
ACF has been entrusted by Congress with the care of unaccompanied children. The agency that oversees that mission cannot simultaneously protect those children and help this administration

[8] ORR, Data: Released to Sponsors, https://acf.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data (last updated May 13, 2026).

[9] Sen. Wyden Letter to Robert F. Kennedy Jr., (May 12, 2026), https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/051226_letter_to_hhs_on_orr.pdf.

deport them to dangerous conditions. I expect your direct engagement on these matters during the briefing.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance