

MIKE CRAPO, IDAHO, CHAIRMAN

CHUCK GRASSLEY, IOWA
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
TIM SCOTT, SOUTH CAROLINA
BILL CASSIDY, LOUISIANA
JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA
STEVE DAINES, MONTANA
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
JOHN BARRASSO, WYOMING
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
ROGER MARSHALL, KANSAS

RON WYDEN, OREGON
MARIA CANTWELL, WASHINGTON
MICHAEL F. BENNET, COLORADO
MARK R. WARNER, VIRGINIA
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND
MAGGIE HASSAN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO, NEVADA
ELIZABETH WARREN, MASSACHUSETTS
BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT
TINA SMITH, MINNESOTA
BEN RAY LUJAN, NEW MEXICO
RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, GEORGIA
PETER WELCH, VERMONT

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

GREGG RICHARD, STAFF DIRECTOR
JOSHUA SHEINKMAN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

August 29, 2025

Angie Salazar
Interim Director
Office of Refugee Resettlement
Administration for Children & Families
Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C St SW, Room 5123
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Director Salazar,

I am writing in response to deeply disturbing whistleblower accounts that the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has finalized an agreement with Guatemala to repatriate nearly 700 children in its custody. This would constitute the latest escalation in the Trump administration's push to disappear the vulnerable unaccompanied children entrusted to ORR's care, violating ORR's child welfare mandate and this country's long-established obligation to these children. I am seeking the immediate termination of this effort as well as any efforts to repatriate children from ORR custody.

Unaccompanied children are some of the most vulnerable children entrusted to the government's care. They are most often fleeing abuse and violence in their home countries, traversing perilous conditions to arrive alone at this nation's borders. In many cases, these children and their families have had to make the unthinkable choice to face danger and separation in search of safety.

The Trump administration has repeatedly victimized these same children in the name of immigration enforcement, beginning in his first term with mass family separation. In his second term, Trump has worked quickly to turn ORR, a child welfare agency, into an immigration enforcement arm. This effort began with unlawful data sharing between ORR and the

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)¹ and has expanded into targeted enforcement of reunited families using ORR data,² removal of children from sponsors back into ORR custody,³ and using unaccompanied children as bait to draw undocumented family members for detainment.⁴ These attacks on children have resulted in immediate and extensive harm. Children now face interminable lengths of stay in ORR custody, averaging nearly half a year.⁵ Separated from their families and communities and held inside detention centers, children in ORR custody have grown increasingly despondent and suicidal.

In the midst of these attacks, according to whistleblower reports, ORR has finalized a plan to deport nearly 700 children currently in ORR custody to Guatemala. According to these accounts, children who do not have a Category 1 sponsor— a parent or family member— identified or an in-progress asylum case will be forcibly removed from the country. This move threatens to separate children from their families, lawyers, and support systems, to thrust them back into the very conditions they are seeking refuge from, and to disappear vulnerable children beyond the reach of American law and oversight.

Over the course of the second term of Trump’s presidency, ORR has shown no hesitation in placing unaccompanied children in harm’s way to facilitate mass deportation efforts. The administration’s decision to forcibly remove children from this country is outrageous and would undoubtedly result in serious violations of human rights, American law, and our shared responsibility to safeguard the welfare of these extremely vulnerable children. The world watched in horror as the first Trump administration ripped children from their families and held them in inhumane conditions. It appears this administration is eager to go even farther. In the coming weeks, I will continue to seek a full account of this plan and demand its immediate termination.

Sincerely,

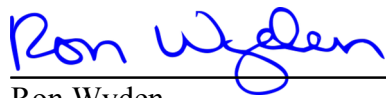
¹ Letter from Ranking Member Wyden to Acting Director Mellissa Harper, Feb. 20, 2025, https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/rm_wyden_letter_to_orr_acting_director_harper.pdf; Letter from Ranking Member Wyden to Acting Director Angie Salazar, May 13, 2025.

² Pricilla Alvarez, *Trump administration takes hundreds of migrant children out of their homes, into government custody*, CNN, Jun. 4, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/06/04/politics/migrant-children-families-government-custody>.

³ Pricilla Alvarez, *Trump administration takes hundreds of migrant children out of their homes, into government custody*, CNN, Jun. 4, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/06/04/politics/migrant-children-families-government-custody>.

⁴ Pricilla Alvarez, *Exclusive: Federal Law Enforcement to Begin Interviewing Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Government Custody*, CNN, Aug. 8, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/08/08/politics/exclusive-federal-law-enforcement-to-begin-interviewing-unaccompanied-migrant-children-in-government-custody>.

⁵ ORR, Average Monthly Data, Last updated Aug. 18, 2025, <https://acf.gov/orr/about/ucs/facts-and-data>.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Wyden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Wyden" clearly distinguishable. A horizontal line is drawn across the page just below the signature.

Ron Wyden

United States Senator

Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance