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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

GREGG RICHARD, STAFF DIRECTOR  
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March 6, 2026

The Honorable Pam Bondi  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Robert Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington D.C. 20201

The Honorable T. March Bell  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Attorney General Bondi, Secretary Kennedy, and Inspector General Bell,

I write to alert you to a well-documented and deeply disturbing pattern of children being abused at a Morgantown, Pennsylvania juvenile prison, which has been reported to house unaccompanied migrant children. I urge you to terminate any federal government contracts with Abraxas Youth & Family Services (Abraxas) facilities immediately, and ensure alternative placements for all children currently residing at these facilities. I am also calling for a full investigation and report to Congress within 60 days regarding the federal government's decisions to contract with Abraxas, despite the decades-long pattern of abuse and negligence across Abraxas facilities.

In August 2025, the Office of Refugee and Resettlement (ORR) awarded \$9.2 million in taxpayer dollars to Abraxas Alliance, an affiliate of Abraxas Youth & Family Services, which oversee a group of youth facilities across five states with allegations of sexual abuse spanning two decades. During this time period, several migrant teen boys have been sent to Abraxas' Morgantown Facility where reports of sexual and physical abuse are rampant. In 2008, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) also awarded \$1.45 million across 16 contracts pertaining to child and youth services to a company overseeing Abraxas facilities. By working with Abraxas, HHS risks subjecting vulnerable children to the horrors of sexual and physical abuse, undermining the federal government's responsibility to protect and care for unaccompanied migrant children.

According to filed complaints, for decades, children detained at Abraxas facilities have suffered sexual and physical abuse at the hands of guards, counselors, and agents, all while Abraxas had “knowledge of, and turned a blind eye to, this culture of abuse.”<sup>1</sup> The abuse detailed in these complaints ranges from inappropriate strip searches to rape. These complaints indicate that Abraxas agents who had inappropriate and criminal sexual contact with children often employed bribery, threats, and punishment, including physical assault, to extract sexual favors.

In a 2022 lawsuit, several former Abraxas residents alleged they were subject to physical, mental, and sexual abuse by staff. One plaintiff claimed a staff member repeatedly sexually abused him and threatened to physically assault him if he did not comply with demands for sexual contact. This repeated sexual abuse drove the juvenile to an attempted suicide as his requests for help were ignored.<sup>2</sup> The plaintiff was also apparently never treated for injuries resulting from the abuse.

In 2024, thirty-three plaintiffs who resided at Abraxas facilities from 2003 to 2023 filed a lawsuit alleging they were sexually abused by staff. Their accounts are haunting. One plaintiff claimed a staff member frequently restrained him and sexually assaulted him. The plaintiff reported the abuse to an advocate but no redress followed. The abuser then threatened to keep the plaintiff in the Abraxas South Mountain facility longer if he told anyone about the abuse.<sup>3</sup> Another plaintiff housed at the Marienville facility reported abuse that occurred on a weekly basis. The abuser, an Abraxas counselor, would take the juvenile into the woods and told him to comply with orders for sexual contact in order to receive a home pass.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, a plaintiff alleged she was sexually abused by a staff member on an almost daily basis and was struck and restrained by the abuser to force her into compliance.<sup>5</sup>

The lawsuit also describes a coordinated effort among staff members to abuse juveniles. A plaintiff reported that a staff member pulled her to a room or bathroom where other staff waited ready to sexually assault her. When the victim tried to report the abuse to her counselor, the abusers prevented her from seeing her counselor. The abusers also threatened to withhold phone calls home and Sunday visits if she reported the abuse.<sup>6</sup>

Six plaintiffs, specifically, accused employees at the Morgantown facility of sexual abuse. One plaintiff claimed a staff member would “physically restrain him, take away food and gym privileges, and/or lock him in his room” if he did not comply with demands for sexual contact.<sup>7</sup> The lawsuit indicates that another counselor sexually abused the plaintiff and threatened to get him kicked out of the program if he told anyone about the abuse.

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1 A.I. et al. v. Abraxis Youth & Family Services et al., Alleghany C.P., Jul. 22, 2024, pg. 6  
<https://www.scribd.com/document/752528017/FINAL-Abraxas-Complaint-Institutional-Sex-Assault-Cases>.

2 Van Buren, et al. v. Abraxas Youth and Family Services, et al., (2:22-cv-449), W.D. Pa., Mar. 28, 2022.  
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3Af194b0ff-efe1-3283-9f23-1a3e59bde14a#pageNum=1>.

3 A.I. et al. v. Abraxis Youth & Family Services et al., Alleghany C.P., Jul. 22, 2024, pg. 23  
<https://www.scribd.com/document/752528017/FINAL-Abraxas-Complaint-Institutional-Sex-Assault-Cases>.

4 Ibid, 37.

5 Ibid, 51.

6 Ibid, 16.

7 Ibid, 45.

These claims, which span two decades, are among ninety-four additional cases of abuse reported by victims that fall outside the statute of limitations. This widespread and systematic abuse of children reported in these lawsuits indicates that perpetrators across Abraxas facilities exploited their positions of authority to sexually and physically abuse juveniles while reports and pleas for help by the children went ignored by Abraxas for decades. The 2024 lawsuit specifically accuses Abraxas of not adequately supervising or monitoring its employees, as well as failing to discipline, remove, and investigate abusers, which directly enabled the abuse perpetrated by staff.<sup>8</sup>

In November 2025, the state of Pennsylvania revoked the license of Abraxas Academy, a Secure Detention Unit run by Abraxas Alliance, within the Morgantown facility. It found Abraxas in violation a child's rights and determined Abraxas failed to report suspected child abuse as required by the Child Protective Services Law.<sup>9</sup> The report detailed an egregious incident from November 4, 2025, where a staff member responded to verbal comments from a child with physical abuse, putting a hand on the child's neck and shoving his face to the table.<sup>10</sup> A facility whose license has been revoked for unreported child abuse should never be rewarded with more taxpayer dollars. Doing so only increases the grave risk for more children to be victimized by abusers.

Migrant youth advocates have also stated unaccompanied children should not be at the juvenile prison. Some of the children who have been at the prison have no pending criminal charges and have parents or family members asking to be reunited with them. As a child welfare agency, and under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, ORR is required to place each unaccompanied minor in the least restrictive setting that is in the best interest of the child.<sup>11</sup> ORR should be working to reunite children with suitable sponsors, such as their parents and relatives. Yet, according to lawyers who meet with these children, the detention conditions these kids experience are similar to those of children serving criminal sentences. These conditions reportedly include restricting their access to indoor and outdoor recreation, and limiting calls with family to two 15-minute phone calls, despite federal rules requiring at least three calls per week.<sup>12</sup>

It is absolutely unacceptable that Abraxas continues to operate and receive federal taxpayer dollars despite decades of well-documented reports of child abuse and neglect. It is also alarming that Abraxas continues to post job openings every week despite their failure to screen potential candidates to ensure that hired staff pose no threat to the children.

For all of these reasons, I am calling for an investigation by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and HHS into Abraxas Youth & Family Services and for the immediate termination of any

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>9</sup> Abraxas Academy Licensing Inspection Summary, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families, Nov. 21, 2025, [https://www.humanservices.dhs.pa.gov/HUMAN\\_SERVICE\\_PROVIDER\\_DIRECTORY/Home/GetAzureFile?directory=inspectionsummary&filename=20251125\\_14405.pdf](https://www.humanservices.dhs.pa.gov/HUMAN_SERVICE_PROVIDER_DIRECTORY/Home/GetAzureFile?directory=inspectionsummary&filename=20251125_14405.pdf)

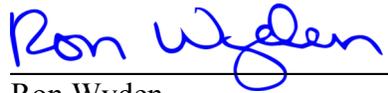
<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008* § 235(c)(2).

<sup>12</sup> 89 Fed. Reg. 34384.

partnership between Abraxas' affiliates and the federal government. The continuation of such abuse is completely abhorrent, and I call on the DOJ and HHS to take decisive action to ensure no further abuse can occur.

Sincerely,



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Ron Wyden

United States Senator

Ranking Member, Committee  
on Finance

CC: Assistant Secretary Alex Adams, Administration for Children and Families