

## Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address June 12, 2014 “Unaccompanied Minors”

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Hello, this is your Congressman, Michael Burgess. We are experiencing an unprecedented crisis on the Texas border.

This year alone, as many as 90 thousand children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are crossing into the United States without their parents. When they get here, they become the responsibility of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement program.

This recent influx of immigrant children is staggering. Consider that between 2003 and 2011, about 7,000 children per year were landing in the custody of HHS. Last year, it surged to more than 24 thousand children.

According to Homeland Security, the number of children border agents will catch in the US this year is expected to more than triple.

What these youngsters are going through is sad and disturbing from a human rights standpoint. But it is also extraordinarily expensive. And taxpayers are footing the bill for the health and safekeeping of these unaccompanied minors, many of whom show up sick and in need of medical care.

Last week, the House Appropriations Committee approved almost \$78 million in additional money to help deal with this crisis. Additionally, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to give the Obama administration \$2 billion to handle the dramatic increase in child migrants. This money comes from a fund of discretionary spending that is appropriated every year for emergencies. I do not agree with this funding process. It is my opinion that this should be offset with the foreign aid we usually provide to Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

Many news outlets are reporting that HHS, an arm of the Obama administration, is not answering calls or giving details about where the overflow of immigrants are being housed. We don’t know anything about their care or how long they’re being held.

Because of this, earlier this week I requested a meeting with the Office of Refugee Resettlement to be briefed on this issue. But despite my many questions, I was dismayed to learn there is no tangible alternative in place to remedy this situation.

But the issue is bigger than just the crisis at hand, desperate as it may be. You have to wonder how secure our borders really are if eight year old children are getting through alone.

It is not fair to the children who are forced into this situation alone. It is not fair to the hardworking taxpayers who diligently make financial sacrifices in order to pay for these migrant children. It is not fair to the border patrol agents who must find a way to deal with this influx of children on our borders. And it is not fair to the Congress or the American public who are being blocked from information about this terrible situation.

My stance on immigration is steadfast. I strongly oppose granting amnesty to illegal aliens. I believe we must improve enforcement of our immigration laws. And I believe immigration policy must ensure that the contributions of law-abiding, tax paying citizens are not eclipsed by the negative impact that illegal immigration has on our country.

As always, I appreciate your questions and comments on this issue. Thank you for taking the time to listen. May God bless you and your family, and as always, may God bless Texas.