

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 2, 2018

Mr. Steven Wagner  
Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, DC 20530

Mr. Scott Lloyd  
Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Wagner and Mr. Lloyd,

We are writing today regarding the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) role in the swift reunification of children and parents separated at the U.S.-Mexico border.

As you know, President Trump recently put an end to the practice of family separation with an executive order. We welcome the president's action. While we fully support securing our southern border, there is broad bipartisan agreement that policies allowing children to be separated from parents charged with illegal entry are not consistent with our nation's values or humanitarian responsibilities.

With an end to this practice, our attention must now turn to the swift reunification of children and parents separated over the last several months. According to reports, some of these children transferred to organizations in Michigan, Texas, and across the country are as young as eight-months-old. It is imperative that these children be reunited with their parents as quickly as possible. At the same time, we recognize the challenges ORR may face in accurately but swiftly determining the biological relationships of separated children and adults.

Given the urgency and challenges of the situation, we are seeking clarification on ORR's process for verifying the relationship between children and adults separated at the border and whether the agency is utilizing, or plans to utilize, DNA analyzing technology. This technology is readily available, provides for rapid and accurate testing, and is already used by the Department of Homeland Security to confirm biological relationships of refugee applicants.

As you may have seen, several leading biotechnology companies have offered to donate significant resources to support efforts to reunite children and parents. This "Rapid DNA" technology provides fast sample processing that delivers a result in 90 minutes and requires only minutes of hands-on prep time. The results can be forwarded directly to an authorized party, with samples destroyed after processing to ensure privacy protections.

Considering these advantages and the challenges the department faces in accurately determining parentage relationships, we urge HHS and ORR to consider the use of rapid DNA analyzing

technology to expedite the accurate reunification of parents and children and request responses to the following questions:

- What is ORR's process for verifying parentage relationships between children and adults separated at the U.S.-Mexico border?
- On average, how long does it take to verify parentage?
- On average, how long does it take to reunite separated children and parents?
- Has ORR considered the use of DNA analyzing technology to quickly and accurately verify the relationship between children and parents? If not, why not?
- In the agency's understanding, do any statutory or other barriers exist, such as privacy and security requirements, to implementing such a program? If so, what are they?

As Congress continues to work fix our broken immigration system, we must not lose sight of the immediate need to reunite separated families as quickly as possible. We thank you for your attention to our request and look forward to your prompt response. There must be no delay in reuniting families.

Sincerely,



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FRED UPTON  
Member of Congress



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MICHAEL C. BURGESS, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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SUSAN W. BROOKS  
Member of Congress