

JOSH STEIN
ATTORNEY GENERAL



June 24, 2019

The Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20530

Mark A. Morgan
U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St., NW
Washington, DC 20536

John P. Sanders
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20528

RE: Safety of Children Being Kept in U.S. Government Detention Camps

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan, Acting Director Morgan, and Acting Commissioner Sanders:

Like millions of other Americans, I am extremely concerned about the conditions at U.S. government detention facilities. It was truly appalling to see the video of a Trump Administration lawyer before the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit last Friday arguing that the detention facilities where the Administration holds children along the border with Mexico are “safe and sanitary.” How can these claims be made when children are denied access to basic items like soap, toothbrushes, and adequate blankets, and are forced to sleep on cold, concrete floors with lights shining all night?

Lawyers who have visited these facilities describe young children falling ill and being cared for, not by their own parents or family members but, by other children who are also in custody. They also describe children being denied access to restrooms and basic hygiene, including by not being allowed to bathe, brush their teeth, or change their dirty clothes. This inhumane treatment must stop, and it must stop now.

While I recognize that the federal government is responsible for controlling immigration and border security, I have a duty to protect the interests of the people of North Carolina. There are likely a number of children in these detention facilities who have close family members in North Carolina. I am therefore writing to request that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) immediately provide a list to my office, organized by the relevant case number

June 24, 2019

Page 2

assigned by DHS and omitting personally identifying information, of any children who have parents, legal guardians, or other family members in North Carolina, along with contact information for those parents, legal guardians, or other family members in North Carolina.

If you have any questions about this request, please call me. Given the horrific conditions these individuals are experiencing, and the profound long-term impact such treatment has on children in particular, I request that you provide this information immediately. If there is anything that my office can do to assist in identifying or locating family members or legal guardians with whom these children can be reunited, please let me know.

Last year, I wrote to Secretary Nielsen, Commissioner McAleenan, Acting Director Homan and Director Lloyd to request information about parents and children in North Carolina, who were expected to be in North Carolina, or who had been separated from their families as a result of the federal government's "zero-tolerance" family-separation policy. I did not receive a response. I strongly urge you to respond to this and last year's letter. If your offices are avoiding response due to lack of information, please let me know so that we can provide assistance.

The reports from the border are devastating and call for immediate action. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Respectfully,



Joshua H. Stein
Attorney General
North Carolina Department of Justice