



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3605

March 17, 2021

Norris Cochran
Acting-Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Acting Secretary Cochran and Secretary Mayorkas:

I write today out of frustration from the recent decision by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish an Emergency Intake Site for Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) apprehended at our southern border at the Cotton Logistics site in Midland, Texas. While I understand and appreciate the need to provide these children with safe, less crowded environment, I am unhappy with the process in which this site was selected and the policies that have exacerbated these conditions.

HHS failed to notify, consult, or coordinate with my office or any of our state and local officials. I am deeply troubled that our sheriff, mayor, police, and fire departments were completely blindsided. We had no time to prepare and no opportunity to provide input and advice. Urgent questions including how long they will be there, if more are on the way and implications on the spread of coronavirus were not available.

I strongly believe that strong partnership built on trust and transparency must exist between the federal government and our communities to address the issues faced by these unaccompanied migrant children fully and completely.

In an effort to restore our trust and transparency with my community, I respectfully request expedient answers to the following questions:

1. When was the decision made to utilize Cotton Logistics and why state and local stakeholders not notified or coordinated with in the decision-making process?
2. What was the data and analysis used to determine Cotton Logistics and Midland as a suitable site and who made the final determination?
3. Why were 700 UCs selected to be transferred to the site in Midland?

4. What are the age breakdowns of the migrant children and known criminal or behavioral background of the children? How is this information verified either by the Department of Homeland Security or HHS?
5. Are more UCs slated to be transferred now or in the future to the site in Midland?
6. How long will Cotton Logistics be utilized by HHS to house the migrant children?
7. What are the COVID-19 safety protocols in place to ensure safety of the migrant children, facility staff and security, and the surrounding community?
8. Are the migrant children tested prior to arrival and periodically while at the facility?
9. Are the agreements in place with local hospitals or clinics should the need arise to respond to medical emergencies at the facility COVID-19 related or not?
10. What is the process and timeline for placing the migrant children with known relatives or foster homes? What if not suitable home is found?

It is of the utmost importance to me that a clear line of communication and open, transparent dialogue exist between your respective departments and my office and the communities I represent. I appreciate a quick response to these timely questions and appreciate the attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "August Pfluger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

August Pfluger
Member of Congress