

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 29, 2020

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson:

I write to request that you convene a hearing of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) as soon as possible to examine the ongoing impact of the Trump Administration's family separation policy that forcibly separated thousands of children from their parents at the U.S. southern border. As we continue to uncover additional details about the family separation policy from court documents and government reports, new information and misleading statements from Administration officials require oversight from our committee.

Earlier this month, we learned from court filings that at least 545 migrant children who crossed the U.S. southern border, and whom the Department of Homeland Security separated from their parents, are still living in foster care or with relatives because the federal government cannot locate their parents. More than two years after the Administration was forced to end the family separation policy in the face of public outcry and fierce opposition from congressional leaders, it has remained unable or unwilling to reunite these vulnerable children and their families. Moreover, recently released excerpts from a forthcoming Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Inspector General (OIG) report on the family separation policy indicate that U.S. government officials, including senior personnel at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), plotted to separate migrant parents from their children for the deliberate and callous purpose of deterring migrants from lawfully seeking refuge in the United States. According to the OIG report, in its quest to send a message to migrant families fleeing violence in their home countries, the Administration implemented a cruel immigration agenda with no plan for reuniting families or ensuring children were safe while in the U.S. government's care.

It shocks the conscience that this premeditated harm to thousands of migrant families and children was official U.S. government policy. The President's statement that the children were "well taken care of" flies in the face of what we know to be true from testimony before this committee about the detention conditions for migrant children, numerous press reports, court documents, and government inspector general investigations. As the committee with jurisdiction over DHS, and in fulfilling our committee's oversight responsibilities, we have a duty to hold DHS accountable for locating the parents of the remaining 545 children they removed from those parents' care. Those migrant families, this committee, Congress, and the American people deserve a comprehensive investigation of the failures that allowed this to happen.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



JACKY ROSEN
United States Senator

cc: Honorable Gary Peters, Ranking Member, HSGAC