



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

July 18, 2014

U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I am writing out of concern for the tens of thousands of children and families from Central America arriving in the United States after fleeing their homeland and to urge you to take immediate action to ensure that these persons are properly cared for and protected.

The Catholic Church, through its many social service agencies as well as through its ministry of health care providers, is currently responding to the plight of these families but additional services from the federal government are urgently needed. We are responding to their needs based on the principle of our social teaching that, regardless of their legal status, all immigrants possess inherent human dignity which should be respected. Therefore, it is imperative that our government respond compassionately to this humanitarian crisis with the care and consideration that everyone, and children in particular, needs and deserves. As you consider a supplemental spending bill to address this crisis, we urge you to:

- Increase funding at the level of \$3.7 billion requested by the Administration to provide the Departments of Health and Human Services/Office of Refugee Resettlement, Homeland Security, Justice and others with adequate resources to ensure that children are receiving the proper treatment and services based on their unique needs and vulnerabilities;
- Reject any proposal to change the statutes in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act regarding the process for unaccompanied children from non-contiguous countries in order to expedite removal proceedings, which would undermine child safety and due process.

We respectfully ask that any supplemental funding you provide for FY 2014 or in future address these concerns. Working together to address this complex situation with the utmost care and compassion is the only way to provide the help and opportunity that all children deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Carol Keehan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO