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May 30, 2024

Mr. Jeff Hild  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
330 C Street Southwest  
Washington, D.C. 20201

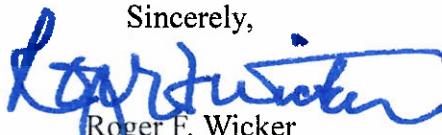
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Hild:

It has come to my attention that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is considering awarding an Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity contract to a private entity to construct and operate an Influx Care Facility (ICF) to house unaccompanied children at the Grand Casino Hotel in Tunica, Mississippi. I write to express my opposition to HHS awarding this contract to this entity given the feasibility concerns of constructing and operating an ICF in Tunica.

From my understanding, if HHS awards this contract to this entity, the facility would have a funded capacity of 2,000 beds to house unaccompanied children. The medical and human services in Tunica is insufficient to support such a large number of unaccompanied children. I am deeply concerned that there are no acute care hospitals or critical access hospitals in Tunica County, should emergency medical care be needed. Many of my constituents have also reached out to share their concerns about the public safety, medical, and economic strains that this would place on their communities. HHS would need to provide childcare, health care, security, psychiatrists, translators, transportation, and other services to support such a large influx of unaccompanied children in a rural area that lacks the necessary infrastructure and labor to support such an undertaking. I am also concerned with ORR's history of chronic mismanagement and lack of oversight over ICFs, as documented by a number of reports from the HHS Office of Inspector General.<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your prompt response and request that you keep me informed of this contracting process and any future ORR contracting proposals or grant solicitations affecting the state of Mississippi.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator

<sup>1</sup> See Christi A. Grimm, Inspector Gen., *Office of Refugee Resettlement's Influx Care Facility and Emergency Intake Sites Did Not Adequately Safeguard Unaccompanied Children from COVID-19*, DEP'T OF HEALTH & HUM. SERVS. OFF. OF INSPECTOR GEN. (June 2022), <https://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region6/62107002.pdf>; Christi A. Grimm, Inspector Gen., *Operational Challenges Within ORR and the ORR Emergency Intake Site at Fort Bliss Hindered Case Management for Children*, DEP'T OF HEALTH & HUM. SERVS. OFF. OF INSPECTOR GEN. (Sept. 2023), <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-07-21-00251.pdf>; Christi A. Grimm, Inspector Gen., *The Office of Refugee Resettlement Needs to Improve Its Practices for Background Checks During Influxes*, DEP'T OF HEALTH & HUM. SERVS. OFF. OF INSPECTOR GEN. (May 2023), <https://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region6/62107003.pdf>.