



STATE OF INDIANA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
State House, Second Floor  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Michael R. Pence  
*Governor*

July 29, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

I am writing to express my profound concern about the federal government's mishandling of the present crisis of unaccompanied children crossing the nation's Southern border by the tens of thousands. The federal government has not dealt with this crisis in an effective or transparent manner with regard to the states, and I urge you to take immediate action to resolve this crisis and provide states with timely and necessary information.

In Indiana last week, we learned from media reports that more than two hundred unaccompanied children had been placed by the federal government with sponsors in our state. Only after these media reports were published did the state receive notice from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that in fact 245 unaccompanied children had been placed in Indiana during the period from January 1, 2014 through July 7, 2014. I have been informed that HHS will only provide monthly updated numbers of unaccompanied children placed in states during the first week of each month. This is unacceptable.

While we feel deep compassion for these children, our country must secure its borders and provide for a legal and orderly immigration process. Those who have crossed our border illegally should be treated humanely and with decency and respect, but they should be returned expeditiously to their home countries to be reunited with their families rather than being dispersed around the United States in sponsored placement or long-term detention facilities. Failure to expedite the return of unaccompanied children thwarts the rule of law and will only continue to send a distorted message that illegally crossing into America is without consequence.

Indiana will be responsible for the costs of education for these unaccompanied children and perhaps other costs related to their health and welfare, and therefore, we require transparency and timely information about their placement in the state. For example, in many districts across Indiana, the 2014-2015 school year starts in just a few days, and school officials need accurate information about unaccompanied children who will potentially be in their classrooms while placed with their sponsors.

I am also writing to formally request real-time updates of unaccompanied children placed in Indiana, both for arrivals and departures, so that our state can react appropriately without a lag of weeks in receiving this information. I also request information related to the legal status of sponsors with whom children are being placed and the localities in which they reside.

Indiana has welcomed immigrants throughout its history and will continue to open its communities to those who legally come to America and choose to make their home in the Hoosier state. And as you may know, I have long sought to be a constructive voice on the issue of border security and immigration reform. During my service in Congress I proposed sensible immigration reform measures to strengthen our borders and provide new and improved ways for immigrants to legally come into our country. What we are currently experiencing in Indiana and states across the nation as this crisis deepens, however, is neither sensible nor humane. States should not be asked by the federal government to deal with the consequences of a failed national immigration policy.

Mr. President, the federal government must move quickly to solve this crisis, and in the meantime it must be transparent with timely information to states. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael R. Pence". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being the most prominent part.

Michael R. Pence  
Governor of Indiana