



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

May 30, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

As you know, while we have witnessed a significant reduction in the number of apprehensions on our southwest border over the last decade, recently the Nation has experienced a large increase in the number of children arriving without a parent or guardian. Nearly all of the increase in this vulnerable population has come from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, consistent with broader migration trends from these countries.

This recent increase in unaccompanied children has created an acute humanitarian situation. The entire Administration is focused on addressing the immediate and pressing challenges to make sure these children are appropriately cared for, as required by Federal law. The White House is working closely with the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), Health and Human Services (HHS), State, Defense, and other agencies to ensure a coordinated and rapid Government-wide response in the short term, and to undertake broader, longer-term reforms to address the root causes behind these recent migration trends.

While the situation on the ground remains very fluid, we are committed to providing updated cost projections as we obtain better information, drawing on the expertise of our Federal agencies. The President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Budget requested \$868 million for the Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) program at HHS, consistent with the level of funding provided in the 2014 enacted bill.

More recently, HHS, in consultation with Office of Management and Budget and DHS, has developed an improved model to predict FY 2015 costs, incorporating the assumption that the month-over-month rate of increase in arrivals that we have been experiencing for the past year will continue. Using this approach, we estimate that the UAC program at HHS will cost \$2.28 billion in FY 2015. Also, under these latest projections, DHS would require an additional \$166 million to expand base capabilities such as Customs and Border Protection overtime, contract services for care and support of UACs, and transportation costs. These estimates are subject to inherent uncertainty, given the fluidity of the facts on the ground, and could increase or decrease over time. Due to this uncertainty, providing appropriate flexibilities to HHS and relevant components at DHS in the FY 2015 appropriations bills would help address unforeseen needs.

The Administration looks forward to working with the Committees to assess how to best address future funding needs associated with the evolving situation on the ground. We will also keep you informed about whether our agencies have sufficient resources to manage arrivals for the remainder of FY 2014.

Finally, we have an ongoing interagency group that has been actively engaged not only in making sure that the needs of the children are met in the near term, but also in identifying longer-term strategies for containing costs through increased collaboration and programmatic efficiencies, while ensuring quality care. The Administration continues to prioritize protecting our borders from transnational criminal organizations that traffic weapons, drugs, and contraband and dismantling human smuggling networks through increased investigations and prosecutions. We aim to do so in a manner that promotes lawful entry and exit – an essential component of our homeland security, economic prosperity and national sovereignty.

We will keep you informed of our progress in those efforts as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. C. Deese', written in a cursive style.

Brian C. Deese
Deputy Director

Identical Letter Sent to:

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
The Honorable Harold Rogers
The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Nita Lowey