



Office of the City Clerk

City Hall
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Legislation Text

File #: R2018-842, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, it is now widely known that Chicago is at least a temporary home to children who have been forcibly separated from their parents at the U.S. and Mexico border and placed in shelters by federal authorities; and

WHEREAS, news reports of distressing abuse and mistreatment allegations at a state-licensed Chicago shelter have brought into focus the duties and responsibilities that the City has to protect the health, safety, and welfare of these children; and

WHEREAS, shelter conditions have come to the forefront of public awareness in the aftermath of a "zero tolerance" federal immigration policy that led to the separation of 2,000 migrant children from their parents over a six-week period between April 18 and May 31, 2018; and

WHEREAS, although a federal judge has since ordered reunifications by specific deadlines, these have not been met and the order does not eliminate the long-standing existence of these shelters for unaccompanied migrant children; and

WHEREAS, since 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded nearly \$5 billion in grants through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), mostly to religious and nonprofit organizations in eighteen (18) states, to house children who arrive in the country unaccompanied; and

WHEREAS, ORR affiliated shelters are not designed for long-term residency, they are meant to serve as intermediaries, usually placing children with a parent, a close family member, a family friend, or, in rare cases, in a foster home within a month and typically provide an array of social services, such as education, food, clothing, and mental health sendees; and

WHEREAS, Heartland Alliance, an Illinois-licensed child welfare agency, is under contract with ORR as the sole provider of these services in the City of Chicago, serving seventy-three (73) children recently separated from their parents at the border; and

WHEREAS, recently United States Senator Richard Durbin urged HHS*s Office of the Inspector General, to investigate a facility run by Heartland Alliance in Chicago, Casa Guadalupe, after the Washington Post reported that there had been allegations of abuse at this facility; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, which licenses the agency, has launched an investigation due to the claims: and

WHEREAS, the current political climate has brought to light both the ever-expanding role of these migrant children shelters and the extent to which the resources and capabilities of those charged with their oversight are increasingly burdened and strained; and

Respectfully submitted

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Chairman