

The Impact of Unaccompanied Alien Minors (UACs) and the Need for
Consultation and Notification with Local Communities
U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security
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Statement of Sheriff Thomas M. Hodgson
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When President Obama signed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Executive Order in January 2012 we experienced a dramatic surge of unaccompanied minors entering the United States illegally. This unprecedented influx of illegals quickly began overtaking our resources and infrastructure. In Massachusetts, we have received 1,400 unaccompanied minors and in Bristol County we have placed 90 between January 2014 and August 30, 2014.

One of the immediate effects was the compromising of our public safety and national security. Individuals with gang affiliations, including association with transnational gangs, began weaving themselves into the fabric of our communities. It was reported recently that one of these minors admitted committing his first murder at the age of eight. Safe houses have been established in border communities and are used to hold illegals who want to enter other states undetected. The minors being held in those houses have been sexually and physically abused and exposed to illegal drugs. Eventually, they are smuggled into our communities in need of social services and counseling.

Our border security has been severely compromised as the officers have been redirected from enforcement and surveillance efforts to processing and babysitting duties for the illegal minors. Consequently, drug cartels have accelerated their efforts to increase drug and human trafficking into the United States and that is felt in communities throughout the country. Incidents of sexual abuse, murder, and other crimes, reported or not, have been attributed, in part, to illegal aliens.

Thousands of these unaccompanied minors are being placed in foster care and municipalities throughout the country with little or no notification to local officials or the community at large. The costs to taxpayers is staggering. For example, the total tax dollars paid to Baptist Children and Family Services for care of 2,400 minors, over a four month period, was 183 million dollars. Additionally, many minors are placed with distant relatives or friends, legal or not, who are supposed to guarantee the individual appears for their immigration hearing within three years. We know that 70% do not report for their hearing and are difficult to locate given the resources that would be needed and aren't available.

With regards to public health, we recognize that the majority of illegals arrive from countries that have lower standards of healthcare which attributes to inordinate numbers

of cases of Chicken Pox, Tuberculosis, Scabies, respiratory diseases, and other communicable diseases. Processing centers such as the Chula Vista, California and Artesia, New Mexico facilities have had to be quarantined due to outbreaks of Chicken Pox and Tuberculosis. The costs for medical care for illegals is astronomical and exacerbated by the fact that even at the processing centers they must use expensive Emergency Rooms for care. The impacts extend beyond absorbing minors as their border surge has a ripple effect. For example, hundreds of ICE detainees in Texas were diverted to be held in the Boston area to make way for the influx in South Texas, at great expense to the government just for transportation. Besides impacting ICE's local capacity to detail illegal aliens arrested in this region, one of the transferred ICE detainees had to be hospitalized in our area, and the government incurred millions of dollars in medical expenses for him. He was subsequently returned to Texas (at taxpayer expense) and after all that trouble, was released. This incident illustrates how the border surge disrupted ICE operations nationwide, and imposed unnecessary expenses on taxpayers.

Keep in mind that there are thousands of unaccompanied minors who have entered the country, undetected and unprocessed, for contagious diseases, creating an even greater risk living in our neighborhoods and enrolling in our schools.

I'm sure you understand from my testimony today that allowing people to enter our country illegally and then granting them amnesty creates an unfair hardship on the American people and those who are legal residents. Innocent people are losing their lives and others are being exposed to communicable diseases. American tax dollars to the tune of 40 billion dollars per year are spent to provide services for people who violated our laws by entering and living in our country illegally.

Given our deteriorating infrastructure, joblessness, homelessness, need for improving our education system, loss of benefits for our elderly and war veterans we need to make certain that our tax dollars are reinvested for the purposes they were intended.

In the interests of public safety, public health, and expenditure of taxpayers' money, I believe that it would be useful to have legislation that allows communities to have input on any recommendation by Federal authorities to place unaccompanied minors in our communities.