
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 512 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY HOWARD, SAPPEY, FRANKEL, WEBSTER, SANCHEZ,
YOUNGBLOOD, KINSEY, HANBIDGE, SHUSTERMAN, CALTAGIRONE,
DONATUCCI, OTTEN, SCHLOSSBERG, HOHENSTEIN, FREEMAN, HILL-
EVANS AND ROEBUCK, SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Condemning the inhumane treatment and detention of migrant
2 children at our country's southern border and urging the
3 Federal Government to end the practice of child detention.

4 WHEREAS, The American immigration system is in the midst of a
5 humanitarian crisis at our country's southern border; and

6 WHEREAS, The president has knowingly and wrongfully attempted
7 to assassinate the character of migrant individuals to
8 dehumanize them and justify his administration's morally
9 repugnant treatment of migrants who come to America seeking
10 asylum; and

11 WHEREAS, The Trump Administration has failed to fully cease
12 the family separation policy it established in 2018, which
13 ripped thousands of migrant children from the care of their
14 parents and placed them in shelters scattered throughout several
15 states; and

16 WHEREAS, Thousands of migrant children are being held against
17 their will by our Federal Government for weeks on end without

1 proper care; and

2 WHEREAS, The extended length of time that these children are
3 being held is a direct violation of the 1997 Flores Settlement
4 Agreement, in which Federal courts set limits on the length of
5 time and conditions under which children can be incarcerated in
6 immigration detention; and

7 WHEREAS, The Flores Settlement Agreement requires the
8 government to promptly release children to sponsors or relatives
9 or transfer them to a nonrestrictive, licensed facility that is
10 appropriate for their age and any special needs; and

11 WHEREAS, Under the Flores Settlement Agreement, the release
12 of a child is typically required to happen within 20 days of the
13 child's arrival at a Federal Government facility; and

14 WHEREAS, The Trump Administration has sought to terminate the
15 Flores Settlement Agreement's legal safeguards to allow the
16 government to incarcerate more families for significantly longer
17 periods of time; and

18 WHEREAS, The United States Border Patrol and the United
19 States Department of Health and Human Services should be
20 releasing unaccompanied children to relatives and sponsors as
21 expeditiously as possible; and

22 WHEREAS, Some children have been held at the nation's largest
23 detention center in Homestead, Florida, for up to six months,
24 due to poor case management; and

25 WHEREAS, An information-sharing agreement between the United
26 States Department of Health and Human Services and the United
27 States Department of Homeland Security has added to the number
28 of unaccompanied children in custody, as the agreement places
29 the fear of detention and deportation on potential sponsors; and

30 WHEREAS, It was reported in June that the Homestead facility

1 housed more than 3,000 unaccompanied children between 13 and 17
2 years of age, a figure that was more than double the facility's
3 capacity; and

4 WHEREAS, The facility in Homestead is not licensed for child
5 care by Florida authorities due to its location on Federal
6 ground and is therefore not subject to Florida's child welfare
7 standards; and

8 WHEREAS, The children kept in the Homestead facility are
9 alienated, denied physical contact and are emotionally
10 distraught, some to the point of inflicting harm upon
11 themselves; and

12 WHEREAS, The conditions of an overcrowded facility in Clint,
13 Texas, have been described as degrading and inhumane, as
14 children held there lack access to basic sanitary products,
15 clean clothes, adequate food and water and medical care; and

16 WHEREAS, Despite lacking the basic necessities to care for
17 the large amount of children being held in Clint, Border Patrol
18 agents have refused to accept donations of toiletries, diapers
19 and other supplies from concerned citizens; and

20 WHEREAS, Clinical psychologists believe the trauma endured in
21 facilities such as those in Homestead and Clint will have long-
22 lasting mental and physical health repercussions on the affected
23 children; and

24 WHEREAS, Facilities holding adult migrants are no better than
25 those housing children; and

26 WHEREAS, An internal report issued in May by the Department
27 of Homeland Security's Inspector General found one facility in
28 El Paso, Texas, to have such poor and unsanitary conditions that
29 Border Patrol agents have feared riots and hunger strikes; and

30 WHEREAS, Cells designed to hold a maximum of 35 individuals

1 were severely overcrowded, housing 155 adult males, with only
2 one toilet and sink, high temperatures and no room to lie down
3 to sleep; and

4 WHEREAS, The lack of transparency and oversight of these and
5 other similar facilities has led to egregious human rights
6 abuses and has resulted in the death of several children in
7 custody; therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives condemn the
9 inhumane treatment and detention of migrant children at our
10 country's southern border and urge the Federal Government to end
11 the practice of child detention.