



Dannel P. Malloy

GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

June 22, 2018

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

President Trump's "zero-tolerance" detention policy on the Southwest border will surely be remembered as one of our country's darkest moments. Along with so many Americans, I am ashamed and distressed that we as a nation had to bear witness to this horrendous act by the Trump administration. As a father and a grandfather, I am heartsick and distraught by the trauma and suffering inflicted upon these innocent children—many of whom are very, very young—from this callous and vile policy.

As Governor of the State of Connecticut, I could not allow my state to participate in the implementation of this inhumane public policy. That's why I made it clear that I would not authorize the use of state resources, including the deployment of the Connecticut National Guard, to assist in efforts to separate families. I support the recent legal action brought by a cohort of State Attorneys General from around the nation against the Trump administration regarding the "zero-tolerance" detention policy.

The recent, partial reversal in administrative policy does not fix the problem at hand. Jailing children indefinitely is not an acceptable alternative. Moreover, delaying the reunification of children and parents already traumatized by the inhumane "zero-tolerance" policy falls far short.

So, while I will not commit state resources to facilitate the separation of immigrant families, I am ready and willing to offer any state assistance I can to help reunify these families. Given the thousands of children now spread out around the nation under your care, there is a considerable amount of work ahead for your Department to locate and reconnect children with their parents similarly dispersed across the country. Connecticut is eager to assist your efforts to return children to the care of their parents and family.

Specifically, we can offer assistance with respect to the children impacted by the "zero-tolerance" policy in the following ways:

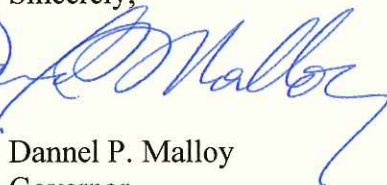
- The state is prepared to help coordinate the identification of available capacity in licensed, private providers for housing children as they wait to be rejoined with their parents. Of course, we fully appreciate that the final determination on placement will rest with your Department and its provider.
- We offer the services of our statewide refugee coordinator to assist with matters related to unaccompanied minors, including those directly affected by the “zero-tolerance” policy.

We also offer the following constructive recommendations for you to consider during this undertaking of reunifying families affected by the “zero-tolerance” policy.

- My administration is very sensitive to protecting the privacy of children in our care, and we extend that same standard to those of whom we are aware in the care of the federal government. At the same time, it is expected that family members residing in the United States may be seeking information on loved ones currently being detained. To that end, it would wise to provide information for how family members can find them. We would be happy to help disseminate such information.
- It would be prudent to inform the state’s child welfare agency when unaccompanied minors are placed in facilities within that state. Though we fully understand that the child is a ward of the federal government, we believe that we would be in a better position to respond to potential needs if we are made aware of these placements.

The more than 2,000 children affected by President Trump’s “zero-tolerance” policy should never have been separated from their parents in the first place. Regardless of how we arrived at this situation, we are each morally obligated to help put these families back together. I hope that you seriously consider our offer and recommendations. We wish to see these families rejoined as quickly as possible and are ready to help with this effort. I look forward to your response. If you or your staff have further questions, please contact Connecticut’s federal liaison, Dan DeSimone at Dan.Desimone@ct.gov or at (202) 403-8654

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor