



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

April 9, 2021

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Harris:

Earlier this week, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services received complaints alleging child abuse and neglect inside the unaccompanied minor facility at the Freeman Coliseum in San Antonio.

The complaints include allegations of sexual assault, a shortage of staff to properly supervise the children inside the facility, and that the children in the facility are not eating throughout the day. The complaints also allege that children who have COVID-19 are exposed to other children.

Based on these allegations, I again ask the Biden administration to close this facility and move these children to federally run facilities where the federal government has the space, personnel, and resources to ensure their safety.

The State of Texas previously warned about overcrowded conditions at these facilities, and now those conditions have led to allegations of child abuse and neglect. Our repeated warnings and questions have gone ignored by President Biden, yourself, and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas.

These problems are a direct result of the Biden administration's refusal to secure the border and its failure to plan for the fallout of open border policies.

This crisis has spiraled out of control and grows worse by the minute. However, instead of taking control of the situation, you have continued to ignore the border while making stops in Connecticut, Chicago, and California over the past several weeks.

In your role as Border Czar, you have a duty to these children and the American people to act immediately.

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In your absence, the State of Texas is taking action. I have directed the Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas Rangers to investigate the aforementioned allegations, and that investigation is already underway.

However, Texas' action does not relieve the Biden administration of its duty to secure the border and protect the safety and health of your fellow Americans.

The Biden administration's disastrous open border policies and its failure to plan for the influx of unaccompanied minors have created this humanitarian crisis. I implore you to act immediately to protect these children, secure the border, and end this crisis.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott
Governor

GA:ntd

Attachment



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services Commission

April 8, 2021

Mr. Luis Saenz, Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor
1100 Congress Ave., Room 2S.1
Austin, TX 78701

Re: Reports to Statewide Intake

Dear Mr. Saenz:

Our agencies, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Health and Human Services Commission, received several recent reports involving children and youth at the Freeman Coliseum in San Antonio, Texas. You asked us for any details from those reports that could be shared consistent with the law:

- Report received April 6, 2021, at 9:32 a.m., alleging that: the bathrooms are not supervised during showers; the boys are not properly monitored and are engaging in sexual behavior in the showers; there is concern about staff ratio at night; there is no staff training; there are no first aid or CPR certifications for direct staff; and the children are not being reunified.
- Report received April 6, 2021 at 9:33 a.m., alleging that: children do not have enough to eat throughout the day; there is not enough staff watching the children and children may be left with no supervision overnight; there is sexual acting out between children; and children who are homosexual may be bullied.
- Report received April 7, 2021 at 1:31 p.m., alleging that: children are not eating enough food; there are concerns about the amount of supervision; and children who may be homosexual are being bullied.

DFPS and HHSC have referred these matters to the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement.

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Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Black', written over a horizontal line.

Stephen Black
Associate Commissioner
Statewide Intake
DFPS

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jean Shaw', written over a horizontal line.

Jean Shaw
Associate Commissioner
Child Care Regulation
HHSC