

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 29, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
United States Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr., Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Merrick Garland  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
United States Department of Health and  
Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Mayorkas, Attorney General Garland, and Secretary Becerra:

According to an October 28<sup>th</sup> Wall Street Journal article, the Biden administration is considering offering almost \$1 million per family to those who were taken into custody and separated after illegally crossing our southern border. If finalized, the total settlement could reach \$1 billion or more.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, this is just the latest in a litany of issues created by extreme policy changes that have led to the ongoing, persistent, and preventable historic humanitarian crisis at our border. These changes have signaled to human traffickers and drug cartels that the United States southern border is open for business, so long as you are not entering legally.

While immigration has been a bedrock of the United States since its founding, we should not be creating policy that encourages individuals to illegally enter our country by traveling thousands of miles through some of the most dangerous parts of the world organized by international criminal syndicates responsible for thousands of murders throughout Mexico and the U.S. – all during a global pandemic. Furthermore, it is ironic that this administration would focus on the well-being of illegal immigrants when, in July 2021, several whistleblowers came forward to shed light on the deplorable conditions at a Ft. Bliss detention center responsible for overseeing the care of more than 5,000 children. The reports claimed that COVID spread among the kids, contractors hired by the Department of Health and Human Services lacked childcare experience, and it took months to receive supplies to quell a lice outbreak among the young people.<sup>2</sup> Unconscionably, bureaucrats in Washington advised those on the ground to paint a rosy picture and to not allow the public to find out how decrepit the conditions were.

1. Hackman, M., Viswanatha, A., & Gurman, S. (2021, October 28). *WSJ News Exclusive | U.S. in talks to pay hundreds of millions to families separated at border*. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved October 29, 2021, from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-administration-in-talks-to-pay-hundreds-of-millions-to-immigrant-families-separated-at-border-11635447591>.
2. NBCUniversal News Group. (2021, July 30). *Whistleblowers say they were told to downplay Covid outbreak among migrant kids at shelter*. NBCNews.com. Retrieved October 29, 2021, from <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/whistleblowers-say-they-were-told-downplay-covid-outbreak-among-migrant-n1275261>.

The family separation policy was ended in June 2018, and, in some cases, already resolved for far less than the reported figures this administration is discussing. To better understand this negotiation, we request you answer the below questions expeditiously.

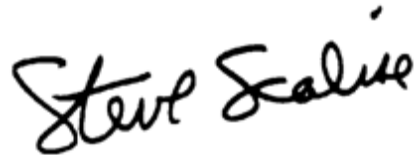
1. Is the reporting correct and could families who illegally crossed the southern border and were separated receive larger settlements than the victims of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack?
2. What is the total amount of American taxpayer dollars that the administration plans to authorize to settle these cases?
3. Will those families who illegally crossed the southern border and were separated be given preferential treatment to remain in the United States over those attempting to legally immigrate?

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,



Fred Upton  
Member of Congress



Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress



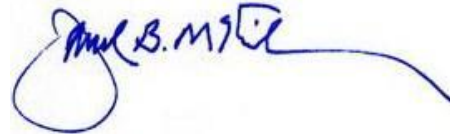
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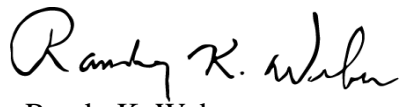
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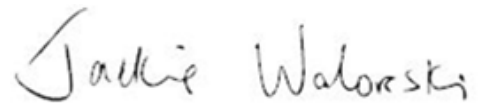
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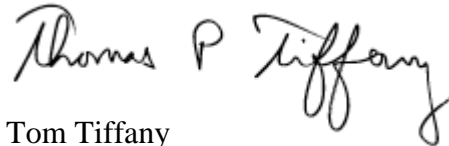
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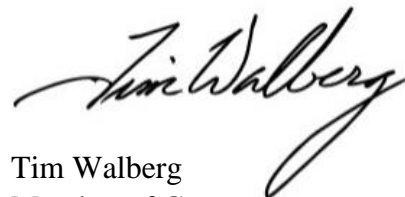
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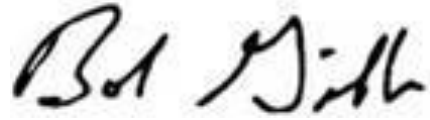
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