




## Obama Administration's Futile Response to Illegal Immigrant Minors

On June 2, the White House issued a  presidential memorandum directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish an interagency "Unified Coordination Group." The group will be created, stated President Obama, in "response to the influx of unaccompanied alien children across the southwest border."

The present Secretary of Homeland Security is Jeh Johnson.

The memorandum states that the "the influx of unaccompanied alien children (UAC) across the southwest border of the United States has resulted in an urgent humanitarian situation requiring a unified and coordinated Federal response."

A Reuters article on May 29 cited Obama administration estimates that 60,000 children unaccompanied by parents or relatives will pour into the United States this year, up from about 6,000 in 2011.

Secretary Johnson told Reuters in an interview that the shortage of housing for these unaccompanied children, some of whom are as young as three, has become so acute that an emergency shelter has been opened at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, which can accommodate 1,000 of them.

"This is a humanitarian crisis and it requires a humanitarian response," Reuters quoted Senate Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) in an interview. Mikulski likened the flood of unaccompanied children to the "boat people" of past exodus movements.

Alabama's two senators were among the most vocal in raising additional question about not only the "Unified Coordination Group," but the underlying problems leading to this humanitarian crisis.

Senator Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) the ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, said, "The need is there, you know the humanitarian aspect of it, but we're challenged on money."

Jeff Sessions, Alabama's other senator and ranking member of the Senate's Budget Committee, was much more outspoken in his assessment of the unaccompanied alien children crisis. In fact, Sessions' statement about the crisis was prominently posted on his Senate webpage on June 3. It read, in part:

The rising crisis at the border is the direct and predictable result of actions taken by President Obama. He and his Administration have announced to the world that they will not enforce America's immigration laws, and have emphasized in particular that foreign youth will be exempted from these laws. The world has heard the President's call, and illegal immigrants are pouring across the border in pursuit of his promised amnesty. President Obama is responsible for this calamity, and only by declaring to the world that our border is no longer open — and that the law will be restored — can this emergency be stopped.

Sessions listed both humanitarian and budgetary reasons for holding the Obama administration responsible for creating the crisis in the first place — then spending large amounts of money to remedy its symptoms, writing:



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 4, 2014

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This is critically necessary for humanitarian reasons: it is simply wrong for the President to continue incentivizing youth and their families to undertake these perilous treks. Nor can the U.S. afford the costs associated with “resettling” these arrivals, estimated by the White House to reach nearly \$2.3 billion next year alone. Adding to the incentive, politicians in both parties have promised citizenship for anyone in the world who arrives illegally in the country by a certain age. The first overriding goal must always be to reduce lawlessness, not incentivize it.

Sessions noted that even the *New York Times* has reported that the Obama administration’s lack of enforcement has become widely known throughout Latin America, saying that it might as well hang a sign saying “open” across the U.S. border!

The senator also quote a statement from *Politico* reporting: “White House estimates show that the projected costs of caring for and resettling child migrants from Central America could reach \$2.28 billion next year — well over double what the administration asked for in its 2015 budget just months ago.”

Sessions has been a constant critic of both the Obama administration’s immigration policy and of Republicans willing to support an immigration “reform” bill based on the Senate bill that provides amnesty for illegal immigrants. I think it would be a mistake if House Republicans were to support amnesty for those here illegally,” the Alabama senator said in a statement last April when asked about a proposal to be included in the House Republicans’ immigration principles statement.

Since the president has called on Homeland Security to establish the new “Unified Coordination Group,” it is worthwhile to review a report last December from the *Daily Caller*. The article noted that Andrew S. Hanen, a United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas Brownsville Division had strongly criticized DHS for assisting an illegal immigrant minor, who had been detained at the border with her smuggler, named as Mirtha Veronica Nava-Martinez, to meet up with her illegal immigrant mother living in Virginia.

Homeland Security “successfully complet[ed] the mission of the criminal conspiracy” to smuggle the child across the border to her parent, the judge wrote in an order issued last December 13.

The case was not unique, noted Hanen, mentioning that this was “the fourth case with the same factual situation this court has had in as many weeks.”

Furthermore, U.S. taxpayers paid for delivering these illegal immigrants to their final destination:

In all cases when the Government apprehended some of the traffickers, the Government transported the children across the country to unite them with a parent (or parents) who was in the country illegally. In one situation, the Government flew a child to multiple locations in different parts of the United States. The taxpayers of the United States suffer the expense of delivering these minors.

This is an absurd and illogical result. The DHS could reunite the parent and child by apprehending the parent who has committed not one, by at least two different crimes.

A major initial destination for illegal immigrants — both adults and children — is Texas. Yet instead of detaining these illegal aliens and deporting them to their country of origin, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) — an agency within DHS — has been shipping some of them to other states. Arizona Governor Jan Brewer recently sent an impassioned letter to President Obama expressing her objections to ICE’s relocation policy, which she described as “dangerous and unconscionable.”



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Fox News reported that Brewer complained Arizona was never notified by the federal government about the operation and only learned about it from the media. “This unwarranted operation is another disturbing example of a deliberate failure to enforce border security policies and repair a broken immigration system,” Brewer wrote. She noted that many of those being released are women and children who are being abandoned without food or water. “I remind you that the daytime temperatures in Arizona during this time of year are regularly more than 100 degrees,” she wrote. “Consequently, this federal operation seems to place expediency over basic humanitarian concerns.”

Fox cited a statement from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) stating it does not want to lock up minors in detention centers or split up families. ICE explained its operations as follows:

After screening by DHS authorities, the family units will be released under supervision and required to report in to a local ICE office near their destination address within 15 days, where their cases will be managed in accordance with current ICE enforcement priorities.

The way this apparently works, notes the Fox reporter, is: “Those sent to Arizona are expected to check in on their own once their deportation process nears completion in an honor system of sorts.”

The clarion call of the Obama administration — but not only the administration and Democrats, but many Republicans in Congress, as well — is that our nation’s immigration system is “broken” and is in need of being “fixed” or “reformed.” What is apparent from the track record of the agency primarily responsible for enforcing our immigration laws, ICE, is that the first thing that needs to be fixed is our lack of enforcement of current immigration laws. To paraphrase Chesterton’s famous statement about Christianity: Immigration enforcement has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.

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