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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 31, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

It is unacceptable that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers posting information on a website as a legitimate notification mechanism of unaccompanied minors being placed in Louisiana. It is irresponsible to do so when the information is as critical as the placement of 1,071 vulnerable unaccompanied immigrant children in the state.

For just one example of the potential negative ramifications of your actions, we are in the midst of hurricane season and I am gravely concerned about the safety and wellbeing of the 1,071 unaccompanied immigrant children who were placed without our knowledge in Louisiana in the last six months.

Coordination and knowledge are critical to effective emergency response. The Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness maintains an Emergency Operation Plan that guides evacuations, shelter response, and allocation of resources during a disaster. Each parish maintains a local plan that supports the overall state strategy. The introduction of 1,071 additional children to unknown locations gravely hampers state and local government emergency response.

Furthermore, the school year is about to start. The state has received no guidance or resources to ensure the education and healthcare for these children. As you know, the state is responsible for child safety and welfare, yet no information has been provided on the vetting process of potential sponsors.

In order to allow the state to adequately respond and plan for these new arrivals, please provide us with additional information on the following issues:

1. How were the identities of potential sponsors confirmed to ensure they were family members?
2. Were any children placed with existing state foster parents? Why was no one at the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services consulted on such placements?

3. In which parishes are these children now living?
4. What kinds of financial support will the state receive to provide for their school, healthcare, and other needs?
5. What medical screenings were conducted for these children prior to their placement in Louisiana?
6. What is the timeline and process for determining the ultimate status of these children?
7. Given we have already received three times the historical annual average placements in Louisiana in the first six months of this year, how many more and for how long should Louisiana expect to receive UAC placements?

Mr. President, answers to these questions are important to preserve the safety of our citizens and the welfare of these children and protect the public treasury in the immediate future, but the current crisis is not a temporary event.

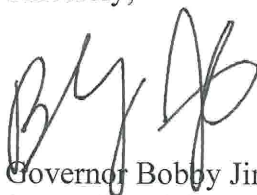
This crisis is a predictable one. It is happening because your administration has failed to secure our borders and enforce immigration laws, making our country a magnet for these migrants.

Our current system is flawed, and the inaction of your administration has only exacerbated the problem.

Thus far, your only solution to this crisis is to demand that the government spend more money. Our porous border is not unsecure because of a lack of money, it is unsecure because of a lack of willpower and competence.

If we don't secure the border we are going to keep having this same conversation over and over again. I know that talking about comprehensive immigration reform is popular in Washington these days. But what America actually needs right now is for the federal government and your administration to do its job and secure the border. That is the only way to stop the terrible exploitation of children that is currently taking place.

Sincerely,



Governor Bobby Jindal
State of Louisiana