

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2026

The Honorable Alex J. Adams
Assistant Secretary
Administration for Children & Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Assistant Secretary Adams:

We are concerned about how the Trump Administration’s immigration agenda is making it more difficult for Americans to find and afford child care. Immigration policy changes — including terminations of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), the elimination of other lawful immigration pathways, and immigration raids in and around child care programs — are driving child care providers out of the workplace,¹ exacerbating child care workforce shortages and high prices.² These policies — paired with the Administration’s recent moves to slash federal support that made child care more affordable³ — are an attack on American families. We request information regarding how the Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Administration for Children & Families (ACF) is assessing these workforce impacts and what steps ACF is taking to prevent further disruptions to child care services and to protect families from rising costs and reduced access.

The child care sector depends heavily on immigrant workers. Nationally, immigrants make up approximately 20 percent of the child care workforce — more than 282,000 workers.⁴ That share is even higher in some areas, including parts of Florida, Texas, New York, and California — in

¹ National Women’s Law Center, “Four Things You Should Know About How Immigration Impacts Care Work,” Kara Coleman-Castillo and Veronica Faison, April 2025, <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Four-Things-You-Should-Know-About-How-Immigration-Impacts-Care-Work-2.pdf>.

² *Id.*; American Immigration Council, “Immigrant Workers and the Childcare Crisis,” December 2025, p. 23, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/childcare_report.pdf; Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, “Immigration Policies Harm the Early Childhood Workforce and the Communities They Serve,” Silvia Muñoz and Caitlin McLean, April 22, 2025, <https://csce.berkeley.edu/publications/brief/immigration-policies-harm-ece/>; Fwd.us, “Prices for all Americans are set to unnecessarily rise under recent and proposed immigration policies impacting the U.S. labor force,” June 2025, https://www.fwd.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/250402_FWD_PricesReport_v13_Web.pdf.

³ National Women’s Law Center, “Trump Administration Rule Raises Child Care Costs Amid Escalating Attacks on Early Educators and Families,” press release, January 5, 2026, <https://nwlc.org/press-release/trump-administration-rule-raises-child-care-costs-amid-escalating-attacks-on-early-educators-and-families/>; Axios, “Trump administration to freeze billions in childcare funding in five states,” Emily Peck, January 5, 2026, <https://www.axios.com/2026/01/05/trump-child-care-minnesota>.

⁴ American Immigration Council, “Immigrant Workers and the Childcare Crisis,” December, 2025, pp. 4, 14, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/childcare_report.pdf.

some cases as high as 70 percent.⁵ The vast majority of these workers are immigrants who have lived in the United States with lawful status, playing by the rules, building stable lives, and caring for children every day — yet they now risk losing their ability to work in the United States, as this Administration has abruptly terminated most TPS designations and dramatically limited pathways to lawful immigration and access to corresponding employment authorizations.⁶ To date, this Administration has stopped most lawful immigration processing for refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants from 39 countries.⁷ Many others have been arbitrarily stripped of status.⁸

On Day 1 of his presidency, President Trump began ordering the elimination of legal immigration pathways and revoked a long-standing policy that protected areas such as child care facilities and other “sensitive locations” from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids.⁹ During his first year back in office, President Trump also ramped up indiscriminate ICE

⁵ *Id.* p. 14; Center for Children and Families, Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, “Who Cares for Our Nation’s Children? Federal Medicaid Cuts Will Magnify Challenges for Child Care Workforce and the Young Families They Support,” blog, Nancy Kaneb, September 11, 2025, <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2025/09/11/who-cares-for-our-nations-children-federal-medicaid-cuts-will-magnify-challenges-for-child-care-workforce-and-the-young-families-they-support>; George W. Bush Presidential Center, “Monthly Immigration Update: Nov. 2025,” Laura Collins, November 21, 2025, <https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/monthly-immigration-update-nov-2025>.

⁶ American Immigration Council, “Immigrant Workers and the Childcare Crisis,” December, 2025, p. 3, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/childcare_report.pdf; The Associated Press, “Trump’s crackdown on immigration is taking a toll on child care workers,” Moriah Balingnit, December 10, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-ice-daycare-preschool-teacher-ae25d67ad83b45f918e47304d5d4b4fb>; Economic Policy Institute, “Trump attacks on temporary immigration protections like TPS hurt the economy and strip millions of their workplace rights,” Daniel Costa, May 12, 2025, <https://www.epi.org/blog/trump-attacks-on-temporary-immigration-protections-like-tps-hurt-the-economy-and-strip-millions-of-their-workplace-rights>; The Center for Law and Social Policy, “The Impact of Anti-immigrant Policies on Children, Families & the Child Care and Early Education Workforce,” Rachel Wilensky, Karla Coleman-Castillo, and Wendy Cervantes, June 9, 2025, <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/the-impact-of-anti-immigrant-policies-on-children-families-the-child-care-and-early-education-workforce/>; The Center for Law and Social Policy, “Trump’s Racist Attacks Against TPS Will Rip Apart Families, Harm Local Economies, and Endanger Thousands,” Lulit Shewan and Emily Rodriguez, September 8, 2025, <https://www.clasp.org/publications/fact-sheet/trumps-racist-attacks-against-tps-will-rip-apart-families-harm-local-economies-and-endanger-thousands/>.

⁷ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Policy Memorandum: Hold and Review of USCIS Benefit Applications Filed by Aliens from Additional High-Risk Countries,” January 1, 2026, <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-alerts/PM-602-0194-PendingApplicationsAdditionalHighRiskCountries-20260101.pdf>; Congressional Research Service, “Expanded ‘Travel Ban’ to Take Effect January 1, 2026,” Jill H. Wilson, December 19, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IN12631>.

⁸ NPR, “How the Trump administration stripped legal status from 1.6 million immigrants,” December 22, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/12/22/nx-s1-5652134/how-the-trump-administration-stripped-legal-status-from-1-6-million-immigrants>.

⁹ National Immigration Law Center, “Factsheet: Trump’s Rescission of Protected Areas Policies Undermines Safety for All,” Lynn Damiano Pearson, February 25, 2025, https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2025-02-25-Protected-Areas-Fact-Sheet-English_.pdf; U.S. Customs and Border Protection, “DHS Protected Areas FAQs,” March 14, 2025, <https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/dhs-protected-areas-faqs>; CBS News, “Trump officials revoke Biden policy that barred ICE arrests near ‘sensitive locations’ like schools and churches,” Camilo Montoya-Galvez, January 21, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-immigration-ice-arrests-sensitive-locations/>; National Immigration Law Center, “Analysis of Trump Day 1 Executive Orders: Unconstitutional, Illegal, and Cruel,” p. 7, <https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Analysis-of-Trump-Day-1-Executive-Orders.pdf>.

arrests, with over 86 percent of people arrested by ICE lacking any charges or convictions for violent crimes.¹⁰ Some of those arrested have been critical child care providers taking care of children in their communities.¹¹ For example, a nanny in Wisconsin was reportedly detained by ICE after a routine check-in despite the fact that she is an asylum seeker with no criminal record.¹² Meanwhile, some child care workers have been stripped of their work permits,¹³ such as several immigrant teachers working at a preschool in Washington D.C. who lost their work authorizations and were forced to quit.¹⁴

Alarming, some ICE enforcement activities have occurred at child care facilities themselves. In November 2025, federal agents apprehended an employee at a Chicago early-education center.¹⁵ During the drop-off period, a vehicle followed a staff member into the facility's parking lot and federal agents apprehended the employee as children and parents watched.¹⁶ Other providers have reported similar enforcement activity, including child care centers in Minnesota that described worker detentions — with one provider at a Spanish immersion program being detained in the child care center's parking lot — and “visits” from federal agents.¹⁷

Apparently because of these developments, providers are leaving the child care field,¹⁸ and programs have seen sharp staffing declines and have begun canceling child enrichment activities to minimize time outdoors and avoid attracting ICE's attention.¹⁹

¹⁰ CBS News, “Less than 14% of those arrested by ICE in Trump's 1st year back in office had violent criminal records, document shows,” Camilo Montoya-Galvez, February 9, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ice-arrests-violent-criminal-records-trump-first-year/>.

¹¹ The Hill, “Caught between ICE enforcement and fraud allegations, child care industry gasps for air,” Lexi Lonas Cochran, February 1, 2026, <https://thehill.com/homenews/education/5715394-child-care-ice-minnesota-dhs-minneapolis/>.

¹² Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, “She followed 'all of the rules' for building a life in Wisconsin. Then the rules changed,” Natalie Eilbert, November 19, 2025, <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/local/wisconsin/2025/11/19/madison-nanny-husband-detained-after-routine-ice-check-in/86948873007/>.

¹³ The Hechinger Report, “Immigration enforcement is driving away early childhood educators,” Jackie Mader, December 10, 2025, <https://hechingerreport.org/immigration-enforcement-is-driving-away-early-childhood-educators/>; National Women's Law Center, “Four Things You Should Know About How Immigration Impacts Care Work,” Karla Coleman-Castillo and Veronica Faison, April 2025, <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Four-Things-You-Should-Know-About-How-Immigration-Impacts-Care-Work-2.pdf>.

¹⁴ American Immigration Council, “Immigrant Workers and the Childcare Crisis,” December 2025, pp. 19–20. https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/childcare_report.pdf.

¹⁵ Associated Press, “Chicago day care worker detained by immigration agents at drop-off time for,” Elliot Spagat and Sarah Raza, November 5, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-customs-chicago-blitz-0d0b19c5e13c0eff1e21646cbd35ad5e>.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ KARE 11 News, “Local child care centers report ICE detentions, federal visits amid rising concerns,” Samie Solina, January 13, 2026, <https://www.kare11.com/article/news/politics/immigration-news/local-child-care-centers-report-ice-detentions-federal-visits/89-2dc1ce9e-8b8a-4964-81c0-b52715e98b8e>.

¹⁸ The Associated Press, “Trump's crackdown on immigration is taking a toll on child care workers,” Moriah Balingit, December 10, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-ice-daycare-preschool-teacher-ae25d67ad83b45f918e47304d5d4b4fb>; The Hill, “Caught between ICE enforcement and fraud allegations, child care industry gasps for air,” Lexi Lonas Cochran, February 1, 2026, <https://thehill.com/homenews/education/5715394-child-care-ice-minnesota-dhs-minneapolis/>.

¹⁹ *Id.*; Axios, “Immigration crackdown cuts child care and sidelines moms,” Jessica Boehm, December 10, 2025, <https://www.axios.com/local/phoenix/2025/12/10/immigration-child-care-mothers-workforce>.

The Trump Administration’s policies risk eliminating a significant number of trained caregivers from an already strained system, reducing access to care and raising child care costs for American families. According to some estimates, the Administration’s immigration agenda could reduce the child care workforce by 15 percent — over half a million workers — as the child care sector loses both immigrant and U.S.-born workers.²⁰ Another study estimates that “a doubling of ICE arrests is associated with a 12 percent reduction in child-care employment” for immigrant women since President Trump took office, and approximately “39,000 fewer foreign-born child care workers.”²¹ Indeed, economists warn that “deportations and restrictive immigration policies . . . could increase scarcity” in the child care workforce.²² The Economic Policy Institute warns that this “labor supply shock” would likely raise prices across the economy, as providers are forced to compete for fewer qualified staff.²³ Because child care programs already face high turnover and must meet strict staffing ratios, even modest hiring challenges can force them to scale back or shut down.²⁴

Immigration enforcement against child care workers not only impacts the child care sector but also risks second-order effects for American families’ employment. When child care is disrupted, many parents must cut work hours or leave the workforce altogether to care for children. One study estimated that, from February to July 2025 alone, the “doubling of ICE arrests led to about 77,000 fewer employed U.S.-born mothers.”²⁵

Already, child care is one of the most burdensome expenses for American families. Nationwide, families spend an average of more than \$13,000 each year on child care, and up to almost \$30,000 in some states.²⁶ And even when families can afford child care, these services are in

²⁰ Economic Policy Institute, “Trump’s deportation agenda will destroy millions of jobs,” Ben Zipperer, July 10, 2025, <https://www.epi.org/publication/trumps-deportation-agenda-will-destroy-millions-of-jobs-both-immigrants-and-u-s-born-workers-would-suffer-job-losses-particularly-in-construction-and-child-care>.

²¹ New America, “The Impact of Increased ICE Activity on the Child Care Workforce and Mothers’ Employment.” Chris M. Herbst and Erdal Tekin, December 10, 2025, pp. 21-22, https://d1y8sb8igg2f8e.cloudfront.net/documents/The_Impact_of_Increased_ICE_Activity_on_the_Child_Care_Workforce_and_Mothers_E_ipNM05s.pdf.

²² Barron’s, “Trump’s Deportations and Policy Shifts Will Worsen Child-Care Crisis,” Megan Leonhardt, January 29, 2025, <https://www.barrons.com/articles/trump-deportations-return-to-work-child-care-caf5af59>; Economic Policy Institute, “Trump’s Deportation Agenda Will Destroy Millions of Jobs,” Ben Zipperer, July 10, 2025, <https://www.epi.org/publication/trumps-deportation-agenda-will-destroy-millions-of-jobs-both-immigrants-and-u-s-born-workers-would-suffer-job-losses-particularly-in-construction-and-child-care>; Fwd.us, “Prices for all Americans are set to unnecessarily rise under recent and proposed immigration policies impacting the U.S. labor force,” June 2025, https://www.fwd.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/250402_FWD_PricesReport_v13_Web.pdf.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ New America, “The Impact of Increased ICE Activity on the Child Care Workforce and Mothers’ Employment.” Chris M. Herbst and Erdal Tekin, December 10, 2025, p. 26, https://d1y8sb8igg2f8e.cloudfront.net/documents/The_Impact_of_Increased_ICE_Activity_on_the_Child_Care_Workforce_and_Mothers_E_ipNM05s.pdf; American Immigration Council, “Immigrant Workers and the Childcare Crisis,” December 2025, p. 10, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/childcare_report.pdf.

²⁶ Child Care Aware of America, “Child Care in America: 2024 Price & Supply,” May 2025, <https://www.childcareaware.org/price-landscape24/>; Economic Policy Institute, “Child Care Costs in the United States,” February 2025, <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/MA>.

short supply; more than half of parents report waiting months for available slots.²⁷ Rather than making child care more affordable, President Trump has done the opposite by withholding billions of dollars in federal funding from child care providers,²⁸ and rescinding protections meant to ensure that child care providers can stay afloat.²⁹ Now, this Administration's immigration agenda will exacerbate the child care crisis for American families, worsening child care workforce shortages, increasing child care prices, and driving Americans out of the workforce.

As Members of Congress committed to supporting American families and maintaining an affordable, reliable child care system, we seek to ensure that federal enforcement practices are not unintentionally driving up costs, destabilizing child care programs, or undermining the safe, supportive environments that children need to thrive. To better understand these dynamics, we respectfully request that ACF answer the following questions by February 27, 2026:

1. Since January 2025, has ACF collected or analyzed data on child care staffing shortages, including the rate of programs reporting difficulty hiring or retaining early childhood educators?
 - a. Has ACF assessed how immigration policy changes may be contributing to shortages? Please describe any analyses or other information ACF has provided to DHS regarding how immigration enforcement actions may unintentionally disrupt federally funded child care programs or children's access to care.
 - b. Please provide any internal projections regarding how ongoing reductions in the child care workforce may affect child care availability, waitlists, program closures, or prices over the next 12-24 months.
2. What steps is HHS taking to assess and mitigate the effects of immigration-related enforcement actions on the safety and stability of early learning environments, and to ensure that such actions do not disrupt children's access to federally funded child care programs?
 - a. What guidance, if any, has ACF issued to state or local grantees regarding maintaining program stability in communities experiencing sudden workforce disruptions or enrollment declines? Please provide copies of relevant guidance.


We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

²⁷ Barron's, "Trump's Deportations and Policy Shifts Will Worsen Child-Care Crisis," Megan Leonhardt, January 29, 2025, <https://www.barrons.com/articles/trump-deportations-return-to-work-child-care-caf5af59>.

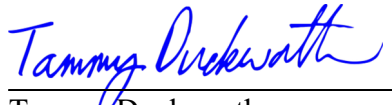
²⁸ New York Times, "Health Dept. to Freeze \$10 Billion in Funding to 5 Democratic States," Minho Kim, January 6, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/06/us/politics/child-care-funding-cuts-trump.html>.

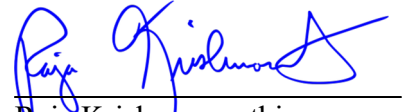
²⁹ National Women's Law Center, "Trump Administration Rule Raises Child Care Costs Amid Escalating Attacks on Early Educators and Families," press release, January 5, 2026, <https://nwl.org/press-release/trump-administration-rule-raises-child-care-costs-amid-escalating-attacks-on-early-educators-and-families/>.


Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

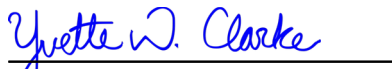

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Yassamin Ansari
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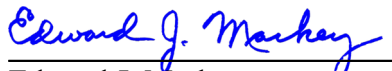

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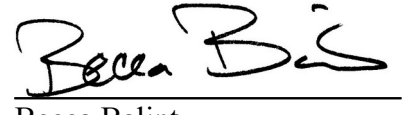

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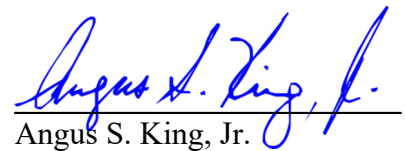

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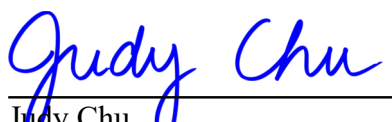

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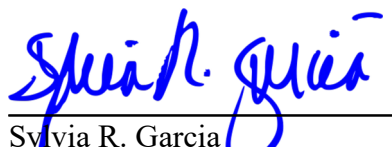

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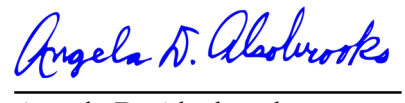

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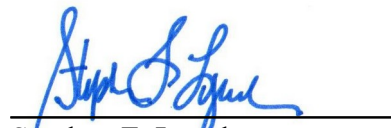
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Member of Congress



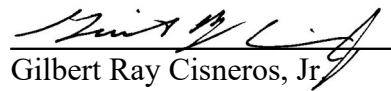
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United States Senator



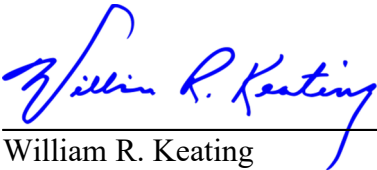
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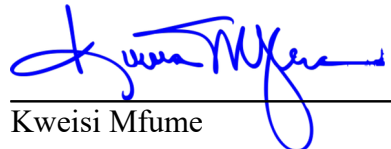
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Member of Congress



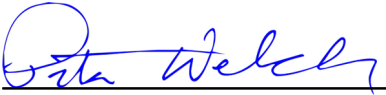
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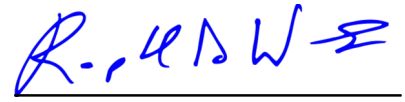
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United States Senator



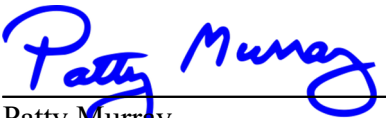
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



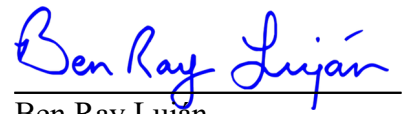
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Patty Murray
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Ben Ray Lujan
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