



STATE OF GEORGIA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
ATLANTA 30334-0900

Nathan Deal  
GOVERNOR

July 24, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Today I write to you concerning the issue of unaccompanied alien children (UAC) who are entering our nation via our southern border and are apparently being placed in states across the country, including Georgia. Specifically, I am writing to you in an effort to ascertain clear and concise information from your administration as to the process that you have undertaken to place these children in our state as well as to understand their official immigration status and the services they may need while they are in our state.

First, I want to state that I am fully aware of the delicate nature surrounding the underlying issue as it relates to these children and their effort to reach the United States in the hopes of fulfilling the American Dream. However, with that being said, let me underscore the importance of ensuring that all those who immigrate to the United States must first fully and completely abide by the current immigration laws of the United States as well as abide by all the laws of the individual states in which your administration may have placed them.

I also want to reiterate Georgia's commitment to fully securing our border. In fact, we currently have members of our Georgia National Guard serving in the southwestern part of our nation as part of this important mission. Georgia has sent guardsmen and airmen in support of this mission since 2012 and, not surprisingly, they have performed exceptionally well. It has been reported to me that these fine Georgians have logged over 2,200 total flight hours, which have led to more than 16,000 apprehensions as well as 20,000 pounds of illegal drugs in seizures at the border. To say that Georgia is doing its part in securing our southern border is an understatement.

Second, and as it relates to the underlying issue of unaccompanied alien children entering the border, it is my belief that you need to provide states with timely and more precise information about the situation. As part of follow up from a conference call this week with Secretaries Johnson and Burwell, my staff was informed that between January 1 and the end of June 2014, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (which is part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services) released 1,154 unaccompanied children to sponsors in the state of



Georgia. This came as a complete shock to me as the governor of this state. I'm sure it will also shock the local communities around the state where these individuals currently reside. It is unconscionable that your administration failed to pick up the phone, email or send a letter to my office to inform us that these children were being sent to our communities. These are communities that must provide support to these children and families as they await the appropriate adjudication of their immigration status.

Mr. President, we do not know where these children are being sent, how long they will reside in our state or who they are even residing with while they are in our state. Georgians are compassionate and loving people, but we are provided with little or no information about children for whom we are expected to provide an education and/or other social services during this adjudication period.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate that while Georgians have opened our hearts and communities to refugees for many years, we have received a disproportionate number of refugee placements over the past few years. My administration has communicated our concerns to your administration in the past. Your administration continues to send refugees to Georgia, while at the same time many mayors and legislators from across the political spectrum have expressed their (and my) desire to reign in the influx of refugees to the state of Georgia. It is my hope that you and your administration will respect this request.

I thank you for your attention to my letter and concerns. Again, please note that I'm willing to work with you and your administration as needed but will not do so to the detriment of my state and our communities.

I look forward to hearing back from you shortly and having your administration provide us with more complete information on this critical situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Deal".

Nathan Deal  
Governor of Georgia