

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Thune and Leader Schumer,

The undersigned 36 child welfare, legal, faith-based, medical, public health, humanitarian, immigration, and community organizations write to urge you to oppose the reconciliation bill, which dramatically changes existing laws and dismantles key protections for unaccompanied children, leaving them more vulnerable to harm and trafficking. At the same time, the bill threatens essential services, programs, and tax credits that support many children and families, proposing [historic, harmful cuts](#) to Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and [limits](#) to the Child Tax Credit. Put simply: The reconciliation bill hurts children.

The Reconciliation Bill:

- **Mandates a host of unprecedented fines** that, taken together, would block nearly all unaccompanied children from pursuing humanitarian protection in the United States,
- **Requires children's families to pay for their time detained** in government custody, putting a price tag on parents' reunification with their own children,
- **Directs government officials "to conduct an examination of the unaccompanied ... child for gang-related markings,"**
- **Permits indefinite family detention**, in violation of the [Flores Settlement](#),
- **Threatens to end critical services** for unaccompanied children,
- **Threatens to return children who have suffered** abuse, abandonment, or neglect to those who mistreated them, by forcing children to pay fines for protection,
- **Effectively eliminates the right of most unaccompanied children at the border** to present their protection claims to an immigration judge,
- **Shares children's private information with ICE for enforcement purposes**, and
- **Undercuts the legal framework of care** for unaccompanied children, which was long-ago enshrined in law and via a judicial consent decree.

The House passed the reconciliation bill on the same day that the Trump administration [filed a motion](#) to end the *Flores Settlement*, which for years has provided vital safeguards for immigrant children in government custody. The bill in fact supercharges funding for detention facilities, including family detention facilities, by up to \$45 billion. This is despite [pediatricians'](#) warning that detention in any form [harms kids](#).

Simultaneously, the bill imposes thousands of dollars in daunting fines on unaccompanied children, with no means to pay them, who seek access to protection and reunification and excludes funds for critical child advocates, legal service providers, and post-release service providers.

Furthermore, instead of funding services to support children's wellbeing, the bill instead authorizes summary returns of children to their country of origin, in violation of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (TVPPRA), a key protection for children seeking safety.

In sum, the [bill's provisions](#) include sweeping policy changes, not just changes to spending or revenue, that effectively dismantle the legal framework of care for unaccompanied children.

As organizations composed of pediatricians, social workers, lawyers, child welfare specialists, community leaders, public health leaders, and human rights advocates, we urge you to seize this opportunity to oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Acacia Center for Justice

American Academy of Pediatrics

Association of Children's Residential & Community Services (ACRC)

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Child Welfare League of America

Church World Service

END SIJS Backlog Coalition

First Focus Campaign for Children

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Justice in Motion

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

National Center for Youth Law

National Immigrant Justice Center

Nexus Family Healing

Physicians for Human Rights Student Advisory Board

Refugee Council USA

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)

University of Maryland SAFE Center for Human Trafficking Survivors

Witness at the Border

Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

State and Local Organizations

4Cs of Alameda County

Ayuda

California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Children's Defense Fund-Texas

Immigrant Children Advocates' Relief Effort (ICARE)

Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef)

Lad Lake, Inc.

MCHS Family of Services

Michigan Immigrant Rights Center

Multicultural Family Center

ProBAR

Sycamores

Redwood Community Services

The Children's Partnership

Unaccompanied Latin American Minor Project (U-LAMP)

Vanderheyden, Inc.

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