



November 6, 2018

Debbie Seguin
Office of Policy, United States Immigration, Customs Enforcement
Department of Homeland Security
500 12th street SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Submitted via [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

Re: Comments in Response to Apprehension, Processing, Care, and Custody of Alien Minors and Unaccompanied Alien Children

The Kalamazoo Community Foundation submits this public comment out of concern with the attempts by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services to alter and undermine the child welfare standards under the 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement that protect immigrant children. This agreement ensures that the federal government adheres to basic standards regarding the care and release of immigrant children who have arrived in the United States with and without an adult member of their family present and are in federal custody. The proposed adjustments of this agreement are particularly concerning due to the extenuating circumstances under which vulnerable immigrant children arrive in our country. Furthermore, this agreement is critical as it puts limitations on our federal government's ability to put children in detention centers for more than 20 days, allowing for more humane treatment of children while in detention facilities for a shorter period of time. We, along with many others in the philanthropic sector, do not believe family detention is a viable nor humane solution to addressing forcible family separation and ask that this proposed deregulatory measure be withdrawn from consideration.

Historically, family detention facilities have been plagued by reports of subpar conditions including: inadequate medical and mental health care for adults and children, inappropriate disciplinary methods and fundamentally broken due process with little access to attorneys. According to a report from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General, only 63 percent of immigrants are held in detention centers that are inspected under the most robust set of guidelines. We strongly believe that incarcerating mothers and their children together is unjustified and will be harmful, especially to the vulnerable immigrant



children who are seeking refuge here in the United States. Children in these difficult circumstances are already experience compounding trauma. They often experience trauma in their home countries, during the grueling journey to the border and will now be faced with additional trauma as they are placed in detention facilities for an indefinite period of time with their families.

For America to embody the values it espouses we must support basic human rights policies that keep children and families together while also allowing them to thrive in communities that will support them and systems that will protect them without the use of detention facilities. As a foundation that is focused on improving life outcomes for children through education and a non-profit organization working toward racial equity, we are actively supporting organizations that are engaged in protecting immigrant families from harmful policy decisions. The Kalamazoo Community Foundation understands the vulnerabilities that immigrant families face, and even more so the children within these families. We believe that education is essential to advancing the life of every child and that children are best equipped to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally when they live in a stable home with a trusted adult in a structured and supportive setting. We all stand to suffer when we do not invest in the education and development of our children. The proposed rule will deprive more children of color of the opportunity to reach their full developmental and academic potential by preventing their release to trusted caregivers and their access to schools. We support families in our own community, alongside many others in the philanthropic community, by raising our voice in order to prevent further inhumane treatment of immigrant families and their children seeking safe havens in communities like our own. We ask that this proposal be immediately withdrawn for consideration in favor of regulations consistent with the Flores Settlement Agreement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CP", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Carrie Pickett-Erway
President/CEO
Kalamazoo Community Foundation