ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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Majority (202) 225–2927 Minority (202) 225–3641

July 26, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden Chairman Committee on Energy and Commerce U.S. House of Representatives 2125 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess Chairman Subcommittee on Health Committee on Energy and Commerce U.S. House of Representatives 2125 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Chairman Burgess:

We write to renew the formal request made over a month ago by every Democratic Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee to hold a hearing as soon as possible on the family separation crisis that has resulted from the Administration's "zero tolerance" policy. It is our duty as the committee of jurisdiction over the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to fully understand the implications of this policy and how the Administration is working to reunify the families that were forcibly separated.

We appreciated the briefing arranged for us and other Committee members earlier this week at the Secretary's Operation Center (SOC) by HHS and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). However, that discussion with key Administration officials in charge of trying to reunite families resulted in raising more questions than answers. More broadly, we have not been satisfied by the responses provided to Congress by HHS to date, and until the

¹ Letter from Democratic Members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, to Chairman Walden and Chairman Burgess (June 20, 2018).

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relevant officials testify, we will continue to lack the information we need to fulfill our oversight responsibility.

This Committee and the American public deserve to hear directly from the relevant Administration officials about the efforts underway to reunify families, and to understand what actions will be taken in the multitude of complex cases where reunification has been made more difficult if not impossible because of the poor planning that went into this ill-conceived policy. Just this week, for example, it was reported that more than 450 parents may have been deported without their children which, if true, may make reunification even more difficult. In addition to our ongoing concerns regarding reunification efforts, we also must hear from Administration officials why the "zero tolerance" policy was implemented and carried out to ensure that such a reckless policy can never happen again. Finally, we must also get answers from the Administration on how the children separated from their families have been cared for and what long-term health implications could result from the trauma they have experienced.

The forcible separation of families at our southern border was a man-made crisis created by the Trump Administration and has forced the federal government to utilize and expend considerable resources that could have been better served on other critical public health needs. This Committee must review fully the Administration's actions immediately by holding a hearing and receiving testimony from the key officials involved.

Ahead of today's federal court deadline to reunify all children separated from their families, we once again call on you to schedule a hearing as soon as possible on this issue.

Sincerely,

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Health