

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

Angie Salazar
Acting Director, Office of Refugee
Resettlement
Administration for Children and Families
330 C St SW, Room 5123
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Acting Director Salazar:

We write with extreme concern regarding the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) decision to detain unaccompanied migrant children at Abraxas Academy in Morgantown, Pennsylvania, a juvenile detention facility that state officials have sanctioned repeatedly for persistent and serious child abuse violations.¹

In August 2025, ORR awarded Abraxas Alliance \$9.2 million to house up to 30 unaccompanied immigrant teens at the Morgantown facility.² This decision was made after it was reported that the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services revoked one of the facility's licenses due to "gross incompetence, negligence, and misconduct in operating the facility".³ Since then, between five and eight teenage boys have been sent by ORR to be held in the detention center.⁴ They are being held in a dedicated wing and are sleeping in locked cells roughly the size of walk-in closets.⁵ While ORR has wide latitude over the types of facilities it uses to house children, federal rules require it to use "the least restrictive setting that is in the best interests of the child".⁶

Since 2013, Pennsylvania state inspectors have documented at least 15 incidents in which they said staff physically mistreated minors at the facility, which holds principally juveniles accused or convicted of criminal offenses.⁷ In at least two of those cases, officials documented allegations of

¹ *Trump Administration Jails Migrant Teens in Facility Known for Child Abuse*, The Washington Post (January 8, 2025) (online at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/12/24/migrant-teens-facility-child-abuse-trump/>)

² *Award Details for Contract 75P00125C00019*, U.S. Department of the Treasury (online at https://www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_75P00125C00019_7570_-NONE_-NONE-)

³ *RE: Abraxas Academy – Secure Detention Unit*, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (November 25, 2025) (online at https://www.humanservices.dhs.pa.gov/HUMAN_SERVICE_PROVIDER_DIRECTORY/Home/GetAzureFile?directory=inspectionsummary&filename=20251125_14405.pdf)

⁴ *Trump Administration Jails Migrant Teens in Facility Known for Child Abuse*, The Washington Post (January 8, 2025) (online at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/12/24/migrant-teens-facility-child-abuse-trump/>)

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *45 CFR Part 410 – Care and Placement of Unaccompanied Children*, Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, U.S. Government Publishing Office, (online at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-B/chapter-IV/part-410>)

⁷ *Migrant Children Are Being Sent to Notorious Pennsylvania Facility Accused of Child Abuse: Report*, The Independent (January 8, 2026) (online at <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/migrant->

staff sexually harassing or abusing young residents.⁸ These abuses are not abnormal, instead they are reflective of a recurring pattern of abuse allegations, institutional instability, and legal exposure spanning more than two decades and multiple owners.⁹ It is appalling that ORR nevertheless decided to house unaccompanied minors in a facility with such a record, thereby potentially exposing these children to the possibility of abuse and in violation of federal rules.

On July 8th, 2026, Representative Madeleine Dean conducted an oversight visit to Abraxas' Morgantown facility raising additional concerns. When asked about specific allegations of sexual abuse of minors at this facility, staff claimed either not to be aware of it or that anything that was investigated was found not to be credible. When asked what happens to a child when they turn 18, staff repeatedly stated that they did not know. This utter lack of knowledge of the basic, legally required functions of this facility raises serious concerns about the safety of the children living inside.

To better understand how this decision was made and to ensure the safety of all minors in ORR's custody, we demand your complete answers to the following questions by August 14, 2026:

1. Who within ORR approved the decision to send unaccompanied minors to Abraxas Academy, and what criteria or assessments were used to determine that the facility met federal child welfare standards?
2. Given that Pennsylvania officials had publicly documented serious and ongoing abuse at the Morgantown facility, why did ORR proceed with contracting Abraxas Alliance for this purpose?
3. Has the Department of Health and Human Services conducted a determination of whether other facilities currently under contract with ORR are out of compliance with state or federal licensing requirements, given this shameful occurrence?
4. According to reports, some of the children at the Abraxas Academy facility at Morgantown have parents or close relatives in the country.¹⁰ If true, why were these children sent by HHS to ORR's facilities instead of their families?
5. How long on average are minors being detained in ORR custody?
6. The original contract allowed an expansion to \$14 million and an extension to February 2027. Will this option be exercised?
7. Explain the procedures for transferring a child out of this facility when they turn 18 as required by law.
 - a. Why were the staff present not able to explain this process to Representative Dean?
8. Describe all required trainings and protocols implemented at this facility to prevent the sexual abuse of minors.
 - a. How frequent are these trainings?

children-pennsylvania-abuse-home-trump-b2897054.html)

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Children at Risk, A Regulatory Analysis of Abraxas Academy and the Case for an Emergency Removal Order*, Pennsylvania Immigration Coalition (March 2026) (online at https://39ebcfaf-721b-4532-ad87-61c9f2e53088.usrfiles.com/ugd/39ebcf_772c90543c2e4dcd91efe67893009b48.pdf)

¹⁰ *Trump Administration Jails Migrant Teens in Facility Known for Child Abuse*, The Washington Post (January 8, 2025) (online at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/12/24/migrant-teens-facility-child-abuse-trump/>)

- b. Have these changed since the license revocations? When were these trainings last updated?
- 9. Abraxas Alliance has operated this facility as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit since 2022 after GEO Group, a publicly traded company, divested their ownership of Abraxas. Since then, public reporting has simultaneously listed the same person as both the President and CEO of Abraxas and as a Vice President of the GEO Group.¹¹ Additionally, GEO still owns the Morgantown building and leases it to Abraxas Alliance.
 - a. Since 2022, how many people have received financial compensation from both GEO and Abraxas? What were their job titles?
 - b. Beyond leasing the Morgantown property, what other financial benefits does GEO Group receive from this location?
 - c. What firewalls are in place between Abraxas Alliance and GEO Group?
- 10. List all people employed by or received financial compensation from the federal government since January 1, 2025, who have ever received financial compensation from Abraxas Alliance, GEO Group, or any entity connected to GEO Group, Inc.
 - a. List their salaries, job titles, and any other financial compensation or benefit they receive, received, or will receive. This includes, but is not limited to, any stock options, equity compensation or other form of ownership, or any other financial benefit, regardless of whether it has vested or will vest in the future.

The federal government bears a solemn responsibility to ensure the proper treatment and protection of every child in its care. Allowing any child to be placed in an environment with a history of abuse is cruel and undermines the moral leadership of the United States. In addition to answering our questions, we urge the Department of Health and Human Services to immediately review all facilities used by ORR, suspend its contract with this Abraxas Academy facility pending a full investigation, and provide Congress with a detailed accounting of how these decisions were made.

Sincerely,



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

¹¹ *Id.*