



# CALHOUN COUNTY **SHERIFF**

Steve Hinkley, Sheriff

Timothy A. Hurtt, Undersheriff  
Randy A. Hazel, Chief Deputy

## TESTIMONY FROM SHERIFF STEVEN HINKLEY

### ***Before the, Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee, on Oversight, Management and Accountability.***

Local perspectives on DHS Immigration Crisis:

Good afternoon Congressman Meijer and members of the Subcommittee, I am Sheriff Steve Hinkley with the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office located in Marshall, Michigan. I am pleased to testify before this subcommittee today to discuss the crisis at the southern border and how it may impact northern communities when unaccompanied children are placed into communities for temporary or long-term sheltering.

On or around April 12, 2021, over 100 unaccompanied migrant children arrived at Starr Commonwealth Campus in the Township of Sheridan, Calhoun County, Michigan. At that time, there was little, if any, information communicated with local officials regarding plans or the potential economic impact to our local communities. With razor thin emergency services already existing in many communities, including ours, we were extremely concerned on the burden it may cause to our local citizens. Eventually, Starr Commonwealth communicated that the federal government would handle all aspects of the housing, all needs, and there would be no impact on any local community services. Unfortunately, most of that information is not accurate. A much deeper overall assessment must be considered and outlined regarding our local emergency services, laws, and capabilities.

Federal protective services have been assigned to secure the perimeter of the campus with missions including unauthorized entry and exit from the 305-acre campus. It is critical to understand the legal role and authority of specific law enforcement agencies and it is impossible that federal protection agencies can

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enforce state and local laws. Simply said, the property at Starr Commonwealth is proprietary, not federal property and does not fall under specific federal jurisdiction. Anything that happens on the campus to children, staff, or any individual occupying the campus, falls under the local jurisdiction of the sheriff and state police. To say that local services may not be affected, is impossible.

Shortly after the arrival of the first unaccompanied migrant children to the campus, a meeting was established with authorities and some clear outlines were established.

- The federal protection would be protecting the perimeter of the facility only and they would not be interacting or policing any of the unaccompanied children in the facility.
- All private security at the facility does not have law enforcement authority and it was made clear that they would not be interacting with any of the children or staff at the facility. They would only monitor and call 911 if there was an issue.
- Starr Commonwealth indicated that they did not have any plans for any type of a restraint or de-escalation team in the event there was an issue with any of the children and they again would call 911 for any type of law enforcement or emergency services.

To summarize, it is not my intent to take away from the humanitarian message or role, but to outline the importance for collaboration, communication and most importantly funding. Any type of federal actions or decisions in these regards will have an enormous impact on emergency services and place partial, if not all, safety and security responsibilities in the lap of local authorities.

I thank you for the opportunity today to testify about my experience and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.