



**One Hundred Fifteenth Congress**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 29, 2018

Mr. John Kelly  
Acting Inspector General  
Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20528-0305

Dear Acting Inspector General Kelly:

We are writing to request the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS or the Department) investigate the treatment of unaccompanied alien children (UAC) in custody of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

A recent report produced by the International Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Border Litigation Project alleges numerous instances of abuse by CBP officers and agents toward UACs and describes a pattern of behavior in violation of the Flores Agreement, The William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990, and the Prison Rape Elimination Act. The instances described in the report, which covered the years 2009-2014, included use of excessive force, physical abuse, unnecessary and punitive use of tasers, verbal threats, and, among other things, failure to treat detained children with dignity, respect, and “special concern.”

DHS’s response to the report questioned the validity of the accusations and identified several steps the Department has taken to ensure CBP and ICE follow the relevant statutes.

Recently, Trump Administration directives have resulted in the separation of families at the border and an increase in the number of UAC in CBP custody. Indeed, according to a report published by the New York Times, more than 700 children have been separated from their parents since October 2017, including more than 100 children under the age of four. Given this very troubling development, ensuring that CBP is complying with the law regarding children in its custody is more important than ever.

Therefore, we request the OIG monitor and investigate CBP operations to ensure it abides by all relevant statutes, agreements, and DHS policies, especially regarding the following:

1. The treatment of UACs in its custody, including the actions of the officers and agents and the provision of appropriate care.
2. The conditions of the facilities in which UACs are detained while in custody.
3. The adequacy of policies and procedures DHS put in place to ensure CBP officers and agents are treating UACs is in accordance with the law.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Alison Northrop, Chief Director for Oversight, at (202) 226-2616. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON  
Ranking Member



FILEMON VELA  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security