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August 12, 2019

Mr. Matthew Baker  
HHS, Regional Director, Region III  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Market Street, Suite 8000  
Philadelphia, PA  
19107-3134

Dear Mr. Baker:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your notice of intent to seek space in Northern Virginia for housing unaccompanied immigrant children.

It is Fairfax County's priority, first and foremost, to see that all children receive the care they need and deserve. However, I am extremely concerned about your administration's policy of separating children from their families when they cross the border into the U.S. Fairfax County wants no part in this heartless practice. The U.S. must find effective and humane ways to deal with this crisis. You have sworn to uphold the U.S. Constitution, which is grounded in restraint of power and respect for individual rights.

While the children who would be housed in these facilities may have come to the U.S. unaccompanied, it is clear that these separation practices, intended to deter families from seeking entry, contribute to and exacerbate the situation.

Your notice also did not indicate any intention to provide for education and other services these children need. Your agency has a duty to provide for these children and should bear any costs for doing so rather than imposing them on local and state taxpayers.

The policy of discouraging border crossing by ripping innocent children from their families is counter to every value we hold dear in Fairfax County, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States of America. We urge you in the name of decency and compassion to find other ways to address this crisis and keep families together.

Sincerely,

Sharon Bulova