

JOHN GARAMENDI  
CALIFORNIA, 3<sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT

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May 23, 2019

Jonathan Hayes  
Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement  
330 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

I write to you today to address an expediated program closure that is occurring in Fairfield, CA. As you are aware, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) contracted with Baptist Children Family Services (BCFS) to provide services and foster care for Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC). These children do not have a family member or legal guardian that can care for them in the United States; therefore, the Long-Term Foster Program is their only viable recourse and helps maintain some sense of normalcy and comfort in their lives.

The Long-Term Foster Program pairs these children with experienced foster families that provide care to children during asylum proceedings, an emotionally taxing process that can take over six months. Through the program, children have been able to acclimate to the community and continue their education. Ending the program would have detrimental impacts on these children psychologically by displacing them once again, and legally by moving them to a different judicial jurisdiction.

It is our understanding that the BCFS facility in Fairfield will be terminating its contract and eliminating the Long-Term Foster Program to avoid obtaining proper guardianship over the children. It is irresponsible to subject these children to additional disruption I urge ORR to take appropriate actions that would allow these children to remain with their current foster families for the duration of their asylum proceedings. We must prioritize the wellbeing and security of these children.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John Garamendi".

JOHN GARAMENDI  
Member of Congress