

Issues and Addresses for 7/12/2019

ASYLUM SEEKERS, FAMILY SEPARATION, DENATURALIZATION, and IMMIGRATION

Between April 10 and June 12, Health and Human Services (HHS) caseworkers collected almost thirty accounts of sexual assault and retaliation for protests from children being held in a Yuma, Arizona, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) facility. All of these children had been held at the facility beyond the legal maximum of seventy-two hours. Children claim they've had their sleeping mats taken away after complaining about the quality of food and water, have been punished for sitting or standing too near windows, are called "putos" by staffers (an offensive term for male prostitutes that is often used as an insult implying both cowardice and homosexuality), and are kicked awake. A fifteen-year-old girl described an officer conducting what was supposed to be a standard "pat-down" by grabbing her breasts and pulling down her underwear, all while joking with other staffers who watched the assault. A CBP spokesperson said such incidents did not align with common practices at their facilities and that the sexual assault was under investigation. According to a report from NBC News, Representative Matt Gaetz (R-FL) visited this facility in April and described it as "the worst state of the human condition I have ever seen in my life" and that Homeland security and Border Patrol agents "were dealing with conditions that they had not trained for [and] were not equipped to handle." (Write-up 7/12/2019)

DEMAND continuing, thorough investigation of any such allegations and the immediate removal of any staffer accused of violence or sexual assault.

- **Kevin McAleenan**, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, 245 Murray Lane SW, Washington DC 20528-0075, (202) 282-8494

- **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201, (877) 696-6775

- **ICE Community Relations**, Phoenix Field Office, 2035 N. Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85004, (602) 200-2215

- **Find your Senators here:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fWPKEeiBUwv0vaiTGYGKO37TWU4aSULWvI5sgOo5YS4/edit>

- **Find your Representative here:**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tNhdclADPMfFL2c1V6iF_NDxATh0A_WLxzMt2Tlwm0/edit

According to *Fortune*, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is soliciting bids for new, long-term (with initial twenty-year leases) immigration detention facilities for children. Sites in Georgia, Texas, and Arizona are reportedly under consideration. These plans imply that the government intends to make detention of children (and family separation) an ongoing practice, lasting well beyond the twenty-day limit mandated by the Flores Settlement. (Write-up 7/12/2019)

DEMAND an alternative to massive child detention facilities and an end to detention practices violating the Flores Settlement

- **Alex Azar**, Secretary of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20201, (877) 696-6775

- **Find your Senators here:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fWPKEeiBUwv0vaiTGYGKO37TWU4aSULWvi5sgOo5YS4/edit>

- **Find your Representative here:**

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Via News You May Have Missed: “An even more extreme proposal to hold immigration hearings via video in huge tents in Mexican border cities was revealed by the *Intercept*.... Those asylum seekers who are being required to wait in Mexico would have their cases heard *en masse* by judges in far-away cities. Reporters, observer and family members would be barred; it's not clear whether attorneys would be permitted on site. The *Intercept* quoted Taylor Levy, an immigration lawyer in El Paso, as saying, ‘I have never seen so much crying in court. People are so afraid to go back to Mexico. Sometimes the proceedings have to stop because the crying is so loud that the recording equipment can't pick up words.’” (Write-up 7/12/2019)

INSIST on Congressional investigation of these changes in practice that deny asylum-seekers the right to fair hearings with appropriate counsel

- **Senator Lindsey Graham** (R-SC), Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee, 290 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-5972

- **Senator Dianne Feinstein** (D-CA), Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee, 331 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, (202) 224-3841

- **Representative Jerrold Nadler** (D-NY), Chair, House Judiciary Committee, 2141 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6909

ENVIRONMENT

Citing fiscal cuts, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced that it is suspending National Agricultural Statistics Service data collection for and publication of the Honey Bee Colonies Report. This data is normally collected quarterly, but under the suspension, available data will run from January 1, 2018 to April 1, 2019. There will be no data for the May 2019-July 2019 quarter and those following. According to CNN, this is the bee data-gathering project that has been scaled-back under the Trump administration. Earlier, the Trump administration had ended a 2014 ban on the use of neonicotinoid pesticides that was put in place because of the threat these pesticides represent to bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. How will the rollback affect bee populations? That's going to be hard to find out. (Write-up 7/12/2019)

REMIND those in power that without bees, all our lives are at risk and **DEMAND** a reinstatement of the bee data gathering

- **Sonny Purdue**, Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250, (202) 720-2791

- **Senator Pat Roberts** (R-KS), Chair, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, 328A Russell Senate Office Building, Washington SC 20510, (202) 224-2035

- **Senator Debbie Stabenow** (D-MI), Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, 328A Russell Senate Office Building, Washington SC 20510, (202) 224-2035

- **Representative Collin C. Peterson** (D-MN), Chair, House Agriculture Committee, 1701 Longworth House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-2171

ETHICS and SEPARATION of POWERS

There's a lot going on in the world of Congressional subpoenas. The House Judiciary Committee has approved subpoenas for twelve individuals who were key witnesses in the Russian Election Interference and Russian-Trump Campaign investigation led by Robert Mueller. These include former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, former White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, former White House Staff Secretary Rob Porter (that's a lot of "formers"), as well as Presidential advisor/son-in-law Jared Kushner. Additional subpoenas for unnamed individuals have been issued in relation to the administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy that has led to family separations. In a related move, the Judiciary Committee has also voted to hold Attorney General William Barr and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross for refusal to turn over documents related to the attempted addition of a citizenship question on the 2020 Census. (Write-up 7/12/2019)

THANKS to the House Judiciary Committee for its action to ensure that the full story of Russia's role in the 2016 Presidential election is released and that we understand the actions and individuals involved in creating the "zero tolerance" policy

- **Representative Jerrold Nadler** (D-NY), Chair, House Judiciary Committee, 2141 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6909

Before resigning as head of the Department of Labor due to a potentially illegal plea deal brokered in 2007 for Jeffrey Epstein when he was accused of multiple counts of raping children (let's skip the euphemisms "engaging in sex acts" and "underage women"), Alexander Acosta proposed an 80% cut to the Department of Labor's International Labor Affairs Bureau (ILAB). "International Labor Affairs Bureau" may sound like a relatively boring, box-ticking sort of crew, but it is actually in charge of globally countering human trafficking (including child sex trafficking), child labor, and forced labor (in other words, slavery)—a rather odd move, given the administration's frequent citing of child trafficking as a justification for its border policies. Last

year the ILAB had a budget of \$68 million. Acosta's proposal would have reduced that budget to \$18.5 million for next year. On the other hand, the budget passed by the House in June would increase ILAB funding to \$122 million for next year. A Congressional inquiry into the process and reasoning by which Acosta decided on this proposed cut seems appropriate and could begin with a subpoena for the new Acting Secretary of Labor (and former Deputy Secretary of Labor) Patrick Pizella. (Write-up 7/12/2019)

ASK the House Judiciary Committee to look into Acosta's proposed cuts to ILAB

- **Representative Jerrold Nadler** (D-NY), Chair, House Judiciary Committee, 2141 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515, (202) 225-6909

GENERAL DECENCY

At times, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has used hotels as back-up detention centers. Two major hotel chains, Marriott International and Choice Hotels, have publicly stated that they will not provide their rooms for ICE use. (Write-up 7/12/2019)

THANK these two hotel chains for taking the ethical position

- **Marriott International**, 10400 Fernwoods Rd., Bethesda, MD 20817, (301) 380-3000
- **Choice Hotels**, 1 Choice Hotels Circle, Suite 400, Rockville, MD 20850, (800) 300-8800

URGE these hotel chains to join those saying "no" to ICE

- **Hilton Worldwide**, 7930 Jones Branch Dr., McLean, VA 22102, (888) 240-6152
- **Motel 6**, 4001 International Parkway, Carrollton, TX 75007, (972) 360-9000
- **Best Western**, P.O. Box 10203, Phoenix, AZ 85064-0203, (602) 957-4200

HUMAN and CIVIL RIGHTS

In January, the administration implemented the inappropriately named Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), which require Central American asylum-seekers to remain in Mexico until their asylum cases are heard. The MPPs leave asylum-seekers stranded in dangerous, overstretched, under-resources communities where contact with attorneys who could help them with the asylum process is very difficult. The MPPs have been gradually expanded to different regions, and were made policy in El Paso-Ciudad Juárez more than three months ago. The *Texas Tribune* is now reporting on changes to the implementation of the MPPs in El Paso-Ciudad Juárez that are making the asylum process increasingly difficult and opaque. In late June, the Justice Department ordered an end to "know your rights" workshops that attorneys and immigrant rights groups held for those who would be facing asylum hearings, claiming that because technically the asylum seekers were in federal custody (even if not in the U.S.) only their attorneys were allowed to speak with them—but, as explained above, most asylum seekers don't have attorneys because they are stranded in Mexico. This week the Justice Department has also ended the participation of "friends of the court," trained volunteers

who were allowed to assist judges and asylum seekers during hearings by explaining court procedures, providing translation, and relaying information to judges. The results have reportedly been an “exponential” increase in the chaos and level of fear in asylum courts. (Write-up 7/12/2019)

DEMAND that the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security end these abusive “protections” of asylum-seekers

- **William P. Barr**, Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington DC 20530-0001, (202) 353-1555
- **Kevin McAleenan**, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, 245 Murray Lane SW, Washington DC 20528-0075, (202) 282-8494

URGE your Congressmembers to closely monitor the implementation and impact of the MPPs

• **Find your Senators here:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fWPKEeiBUwv0vaiTGYGKO37TWU4aSULWvI5sgOo5YS4/edit>

• **Find your Representative here:**

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From *Politico* (via *What the Fuck Just Happened Today*) and the *Washington Blade*: Recently, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo unveiled a panel aimed at providing him with “an informed review of the role of human rights in American foreign policy.” During remarks to the State Department, Pompeo said “words like ‘rights can be used by good or evil,’ and complained that some have “hijacked” the rhetoric of human rights and used it for “dubious or malignant purposes.” Pompeo said he hoped the panel would facilitate “one of the most profound reexaminations of the unalienable rights in the world since the 1948 universal declaration.” In case you were wondering what this reexamination might look like, consider who Pompeo has named the chair of this commission: Harvard law professor Mary Ann Glendon. To get a sense of Glendon’s views, consider the following quotations from her legal writing and statements, as offered in the *Washington Blade*.

-“what same-sex marriage advocates have tried to present as a civil rights issue is really a bid for special preferences of the type society gives to married couples for the very good reason that most of them are raising or have raised children”

-[that if gay marriage is legalized] “every person and every religion that disagrees [with same sex marriage] will be labeled as bigoted and openly discriminated against”

-“I am deeply honored to be chairing [this Human Rights Commission]... at this moment when basic human rights are being misunderstood by many [and] manipulated by many”

In case you wanted any further sense of the direction of the Commission, note that its creation has been hailed by Tony Perkins, President of the notoriously anti-gay Family Research Council. (Write-up 7/12/2019)

DECRY the creation of this commission that seems constructed to justify rollbacks in our understanding of what human rights are and to whom they apply

• **Mike Pompeo**, U.S. Secretary of State, 2201 C St. NW, Washington DC 20520-2204, (202) 647-6575

ASK your Congressmembers to closely monitor and critique as appropriate the actions of this commission

• **Find your Senators here:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fWPKEeiBUwv0vaiTGYGKO37TWU4aSULWvi5sgOo5YS4/edit>

• **Find your Representative here:**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tNhdclADPMfFL2c1V6iF_NDxATh0A_WLxzMt2Tlwm0/edit

The *San Diego Tribune* reports that Amnesty International has called on Congress to hold public hearings on the federal “campaign of intimidation” against activists and lawyers seeking to aid asylum-seekers along the U.S.-Mexico border. Amnesty International’s forty-four-page report accuses Border Patrol agents of harassing—via warrantless searches, prolonged detention, and arrest—those working to aid asylum seekers and asserts that these actions violate the 1st, 4th, and 14th amendments to the Constitution. (Write-up 7/12/2019)

EXPLAIN to your Congressmembers that we share Amnesty International’s concerns and want to see these potential violations of human rights and our Constitution investigated

• **Find your Senators here:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fWPKEeiBUwv0vaiTGYGKO37TWU4aSULWvi5sgOo5YS4/edit>

• **Find your Representative here:**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tNhdclADPMfFL2c1V6iF_NDxATh0A_WLxzMt2Tlwm0/edit