



Funding to Domestic Programs Being Cut to Fund Illegal Immigrant Minors

The Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) reports that the Department of Health and Human Services is cutting funding to domestic programs to pay for room and board for illegal alien youths. HHS must come up with \$167 million to cover the costs to feed and shelter the unaccompanied minors through December 9 and has turned to other programs, including Medicare, for the money. And while the programs from which the money is being transferred are unconstitutional uses of taxpayer dollars, the move underscores that the American people are not this administration's priority.



According to Jessica Vaughan, policy director for the Center for Immigration Studies, approximately 255 illegal alien youths have been taken into custody by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) every day this month, resulting in the largest number of illegal alien children in government care. As a result, the ORR is in need of more funding to cover the costs associated with caring for the arrivals and is resorting to taking money from domestic programs to cover current costs. Vaughan explains:

To pay for it, the agency says it will need an additional one or two billion dollars for the next year — above and beyond the \$1.2 billion spent in 2016 and proposed for 2017 — depending on how many more arrive. For now, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), where ORR resides, is diverting \$167 million from other programs to cover the cost of services for these new illegal arrivals through December 9, when the current continuing resolution expires.

In order to cover the \$167 million needed through the remainder of the budget period, programs that are being raided for funds include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Children and Families Services Program, and the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund. The monies will be used to pay for shelter, education, recreation, healthcare, among other services.

While constitutionalists recognize that these programs are unconstitutional as they represent significant overreach by the federal government, most would argue that moving taxpayer dollars intended for domestic programs to support illegal immigrants is a slap in the face to the American people.

But appropriating taxpayer dollars to pay for services provided to illegal aliens is also inappropriate, and yet it seems that further funding will be designated for this purpose next year. An e-mail from Barbara Clark of the HHS legislative liaison office, informing congressional offices of HHS's intent to transfer funds to ORR, paints a bleak picture of what would happen should Congress not appropriate more funds for ORR in 2017:

The budget outlook for the remainder of the fiscal year is even more serious. The FY 2017 House



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 30, 2016

and Senate Labor-HHS appropriations bills propose flat funding for FY 2017, which leaves the program significantly underfunded. Based on the information we have and the trends we are experiencing, flat funding for ORR this year will make it impossible to meet our statutory responsibility to provide shelter and care for the children that are referred to ORR. We now calculate that the program will need between \$1 billion and \$2 billion over FY 2016 levels, depending on the number of children that arrive.

In brief, funds are needed to ensure that ORR can continue to provide shelter to unaccompanied children referred by DHS and other law enforcement agencies throughout FY 2017. With ORR's balances depleted, and having exhausted the additional funding available through the full exercise of the Secretary's transfer authority, ORR is not able to meet our legal and humanitarian obligations to shelter these children. HHS cannot continue to provide the services we are statutorily bound to provide and avoid a scenario where children are potentially stranded at the border without additional funding from the Congress.

Vaughan notes that there is a far better use for the dollars being redirected to ORR: "Congress should instead direct funding to the Border Patrol for temporary shelters from which the youths and their families can be swiftly returned to their home countries."

According to a Center for Immigration Studies report released earlier this year, the cost per each "unaccompanied alien child" has doubled from \$8,217 in 2010 to \$17,613 today. Putting that into perspective, the Washington Examiner compares that figure to Social Security retirement benefits, on average \$14,772, noting that the amount spent on illegal Central American teens is \$2,841 more.

What's worse is that the Obama administration spent at least \$18.5 million to fly unaccompanied minors into the country illegally, according to the Senate subcommittee on immigration. An official with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement defended the practice to Fox News, however, as one that is legal and funded by Congress: "ICE does not transport children directly to parents or final destinations. We should also be clear that Congress has appropriated funds for the sole purpose of transporting these unaccompanied minors — that funding is separate from ICE's enforcement and other funding. ICE is directed in this process by laws that Congress enacts and with funds they appropriate for that specific purpose."

Sadly, the federal government believes it knows best how to use the American people's money, so while it uses taxpayer dollars to fly illegal immigrants into the United States and provide them healthcare, American families are faced with having to decide between paying for expensive health plans or paying a fine for opting out of obtaining healthcare, and veterans continue to die while waiting for medical care. While taxpayer dollars are being used to pay for education for illegal aliens, American families who cannot afford private education are forced to send their children to public schools, where they are often taught to hate their country and to view as racist their parents' anger about the costs of illegal immigration.

The only true solution to this and other governmental problems, however, is to return to a constitutionally restrained federal government that has limited opportunities to abuse taxpayer dollars.



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