



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on July 23, 2014

House Working Group Releases Border Plan

U.S. Representative Kay Granger (shown, R-Texas), chairwoman of the House Working Group on the border crisis, issued a statement on July 23 announcing the group's recommendations to solve the crisis.



Granger, as the spokesperson for the group, said she had presented the group's proposals to the House GOP Conference and that they provide "common-sense, compassionate, but tough solutions."

Granger's statement noted that the group met personally with the presidents of Honduras and Guatemala, during which both stated that they wanted their children returned home. Granger said she and her colleagues looked forward to working with the Central American countries as they prepare to receive their children.

Granger stated,

The recommendation to amend the [William Wilberforce] Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act of 2008 is something both parties agree on and modifications to the law can be done to expedite the process while ensuring proper protections are in place for the children who need them. We recommend amending the 2008 law, so that all unaccompanied minors are treated the same for the purpose of removal.

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The William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act of 2008 (S. 3061) was designed to prevent victims of child trafficking from being automatically sent back to those who had effectively enslaved them, with the court appearance designed to allow the judge to evaluate their particular situation. The law's contribution to the present crisis, though undeniable, is most likely an unanticipated consequence.

President George W. Bush signed the measure, but it was a bipartisan effort, and was originally written partially by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and introduced in the Senate by then-Senator, now Vice President, Joe Biden.

A bipartisan pair of legislators from Texas, Republican Sen. John Cornyn and Democrat Rep. Henry Cuellar, introduced bills in their respective houses on July 15 that would expedite the processing of minors who have illegally crossed the border into the United States.

Cuellar's bill, H.R. 5114, claims it is designed "To facilitate the expedited processing of minors entering the United States across the southern border and for other purposes." Cornyn's counterpart measure, S. 2611, bears the description "Helping Unaccompanied Minors and Alleviating National Emergency Act." Collectively the bills are known as the Helping Unaccompanied Minors and Alleviating National Emergency (HUMANE) Act.

The Humane Act does not repeal, but does amend, the 2008 act to accomplish its objective of expediting the processing of the minors for deportation, where warranted.



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The recommendations made by Granger's committee include, in part:

- Deploying the National Guard to the Southern border to assist Border Patrol in the humanitarian care and needs of the unaccompanied minors. This will free up the Border Patrol to focus on their primary mission.
- Requiring a DHS strategy and implementation plan to gain operational control of the Southwest border.
- Establishing border security in Central American countries and Mexico.
- Establishing repatriation centers in originating countries in order to facilitate the return of family units and unaccompanied minors.
- Deploying aggressive messaging campaigns in originating countries and the U.S. to dispel immigration myths, clarify that individuals will be deported on arrival and advise on the dangers and legal penalties of traveling through Mexico to enter the United States illegally.
- Mandating the detention of all Family Units apprehended at the border with the ultimate goal of processing family units [in] 5-7 days. Congress must continue stringent oversight to ensure this mandate is being met.
- Amending the Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act of 2008 so all unaccompanied minors are treated the same as Mexicans for the purpose of removals. This would require unaccompanied children who do not wish to be voluntarily returned to their home country to remain in HHS custody while they await an expedited immigration court hearing that must occur not more than 7 days after they are screened by child welfare officials.
- Deploying additional judge teams and temporary judges to expedite the hearing of asylum and credible fear of prosecution claims.
- Establishing tough penalties for those engaged in human smuggling, including the smuggling of unaccompanied minors by strengthening penalties for human smugglers and those who assist them.
- Increasing law enforcement operations domestically and in originating countries to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations and encourage originating countries to pass strict laws against human smuggling.

Photo of Rep. Kay Granger (R-Texas): AP Images

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