



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 11, 2014

Illegal Alien Children Are Overburdening U.S. Schools

The massive influx of children unaccompanied by parents or relatives who have illegally crossed our borders this year is placing a heavy burden on the American schools that have been given the responsibility of educating them.

A Reuters article on May 29 cited Obama administration estimates that 60,000 children unaccompanied by parents or relatives will pour into the United States this year, up from about 6,000 in 2011.



Official figures released recently by the Department of Health and Human Services indicate that our federal government had released 37,477 children or teenaged illegal aliens into “safe settings with sponsors” as of July 31. HHS’s “Office of Refugee Resettlement” compiled a county-by-county report that accounts for 29,890 of these youthful illegal aliens and indicates exactly how many were sent to each U.S. county.

The report lists figures only for those 126 counties where 50 or more of these children have been released since January 1, 2014.

The *Washington Examiner* cited news reports that only 280 underage illegal migrants were deported during the same time period, which ran from January 1 through July 31.

In a September 3 report, the *Washington Times* quoted Scott Kizner, superintendent of schools in Harrisonburg, Virginia, who said of the increase of children in his district who are here illegally: “It challenges us every day. A lot of these children require special services.”

Kizner said about 5,500 children were enrolled in his district on the first day of school. If all of the former unaccompanied minors in the city were enrolled, they would represent more than 1 percent of the school population. “I think it is a moral responsibility [to educate children], so I don’t have a problem with this, but we have a legal responsibility also,” he said.

Harrisonburg has added two “newcomer” classes, bringing the total to seven classes in a district with eight schools. The large number of students who do not speak English also requires multiple instructors in classrooms, including teachers who speak foreign languages and are licensed as English-language teachers.

The funding chiefly comes from state and local taxpayers. “The reality is this: The federal government gives us basically no money to support these children, so the funding is coming from the state budget and mostly from the local budget,” said Kizner.

The *Times* writer noted that Harrisonburg has had a large number of immigrants from Central America for more than a decade, most of whom “are likely in the country illegally and work in the poultry and agricultural industries.”

The report noted that the current group of unaccompanied children who are joining them “have followed a well-worn path through Mexico to reach the U.S., where the federal government processes



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them and sends them to live with relatives, even if those relatives are in the country illegally.”

Back in July, Judith Kennedy, the mayor of Lynn, Massachusetts, a city of 91,000 people about 13 miles north of Boston, spoke about immigration-related challenges in her city with Fox News. The program’s host, Stuart Varney, asked Kennedy to comment on the relocation of 248 children from Guatemala into Lynn’s school system on very short notice. Kennedy replied: “Yes, that’s the number that we have received between the ages of 14 and 17 in the last two school years.”

When Varney asked, “Who’s paying for them?” Kennedy answered: “We are.”

Varney then asked, “Now, can you cope? I’m talking financially. Can you cope financially?” Kennedy answered: “This year, I have had to increase my school department budget 9.3 percent, and have had to cut all of my other city budgets between 2 percent and 5 percent to make up for the influx of the unaccompanied children and the surge.”

“We have had over 1,000 not-native-born children enter our school system in the last four years.”

In a more recent interview, Mayor Kennedy told reporters at a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on August 27 that some of the illegal aliens from Guatemala who are enrolled in her city’s public schools are adults with graying hair and “more wrinkles than I have.”

“They are not all children,” said Kennedy. “One of the things that we did notice when we were processing some of these students coming in was that they were adults,” she said.

Kennedy, according to CNS, said the federal government will not allow school officials to verify the ages or the immigrants, even though one of the students turned out to be 35 years old!

This writer’s wife grew up in Lynn, the daughter of an immigrant boy who had entered this country legally with his parents from Scotland. When her grandfather disappeared mysteriously, her father had to quit school around the age of 13 to support the family! (There were no welfare programs in those days.) Her father worked at entry-level jobs for years to put all of his siblings through college, at no expense to the taxpayers.

The main reason for the large increase in illegal immigrant children being sent to local schools is that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials transfer unaccompanied minors to the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Refugee Resettlement to be housed in shelters. Some are placed with Spanish-speaking sponsors. During the period between their initial apprehension and the final determination of their status by an immigration court, the children are sent to local public schools to be educated.

This policy reflects the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, passed to prevent victims of child trafficking from being automatically sent back to those who had effectively enslaved them. The law provides for a hearing before an immigration judge to evaluate their situation before possible deportation, but because of the overwhelming flood of such young illegal aliens, the backlog in our immigration courts is enormous, sometime extending for years.

As we noted in our article on August 8, with the tens of thousands of pending cases involving unaccompanied children who have entered our country illegally, the process of educating, housing, and attending to their other needs will likely continue for years and cost the taxpayers an unknown — but substantial — sum.

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