

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives

Member:

Judiciary
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Legislative Council
Military & Veterans Affairs



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Via Facsimile: (202) 225-0425 and U.S. Mail

Office of Congressman Don Young
2314 Rayburn House Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Young,

You probably know that on Tuesday, July 8, the Obama Administration asked Congress for \$3.7 billion in emergency funding to address the wave of child immigrants crossing the southwest border but you may not know of the local impact in Alaska.

If Congress does not fund the federal Administration's request, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) will need to reposition funds to address the child immigrant issue. In Alaska the cuts will equal approximately \$447,000 and first hit the funds for medical support for refugees, for school impact grants for refugee youth, for elderly refugees and for general case management and employment services for all refugee new arrivals.

I encourage you to support the Administration's funding request and help solve the crisis with these new crisis funds, rather than gutting an existing program to fix a crisis. Over the next few years ORR can find a new balance as needed, but this is so sudden it will lead to rushed decisions, loss of jobs in Alaska and likely backlash from Alaskans who see Catholic Social Services bringing in refugees with inadequate supports. If refugees don't get jobs and start becoming homeless –that "welcome refugee" sentiment will be seriously undermined in Alaska and the fight to get back to a positive place will be a long and difficult uphill battle.

This is a new crisis and taking from an existing program to solve a crisis simply creates two crises where before there was one. I think we can all agree that these immigrant children need help, but effectively dismantling the Alaska state refugee program takes from one vulnerable group to save another. Rushed cuts such as this could result in the loss of smaller resettlement programs, like Alaska.

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Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Cordially,

Max F. Gruenberg, Jr.
State Representative