

Biden Lost 500K Migrant Children—Trump Administration Is Returning Them Home

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Illegal immigrant children walk next to razor wire after crossing the Rio Grande in Eagle Pass, Texas, in February.

The Trump administration is working to safely return to their home countries the unaccompanied illegal migrant children lost under the Biden administration, The Daily Signal has learned.

Hundreds of thousands of minors arrived at the southern border without a parent or a legal guardian under the Biden administration. The Trump administration has located 13,000 of those children, and now, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, a subagency of the Department of Health and Human Services, is working to reunite those children with their families in their home countries and find the rest of the missing minors.

“If their parents are outside the United States, we are going to look at repatriating them to their country,” John Fabbriatore, a senior adviser at the Office of Refugee Resettlement, told The Daily Signal.

Fabbriatore said there is a misconception that the unaccompanied alien children are getting deported, when in fact it’s a reunification process.

“They want to go home to mom and dad in their country of origin,” he said. “We will try to help facilitate that through their governments of origin. We can work with other countries to get these children back to their relatives, their parents in those other countries, if they do reside there.” If a migrant child is in danger, the

U.S. government will make “every effort” to find their parents. Foreign governments that come forward asking for their children back will bear the responsibility to connect the child with their parents.

“We always work with these foreign governments, not just HHS, but [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] does,” Fabbriatore said. “There are consular officers that go out from all of these different countries to visit their citizens that are in custody or in care.”

Before the “One Big, Beautiful Bill” passed, HHS could only repatriate children from Mexico or Canada. Now that the bill has been signed into law, HHS can establish relationships with countries that are not contiguous with the United States, such as Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador in order to immediately send children home to their country of origin. An unaccompanied migrant child might remain in the United States if they claim asylum, but otherwise, the reunification process will take place.

“They may be in fear of their home country, so there are cases where children are escaping a bad situation, and those are situations that we identify early on in a case,” Fabbriatore said. “But many of these, especially the younger adults that are coming up, are coming up for financial reasons, and not for asylum or refugee reasons.”

When an unaccompanied migrant child is apprehended by immigration authorities, the child is transferred to the care and custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement until it can release them to a safe setting with sponsors, usually family members, while they await immigration proceedings.

“It is a priority to make sure that these victims, whoever they are, get access to the services that they need so that we can help them escape from victimhood, rehabilitate them, and send them to their home,” Andrew Gradison, acting assistant secretary at the Administration for Children and Families, told The Daily Signal.

The Biden administration didn’t properly vet sponsors, causing some minors to be released to individuals posing as family who later sexually abused the children in their custody. For instance, a 37-year-old illegal immigrant man was arrested for allegedly sexually abusing at least one teen girl who the Biden administration sent to live with him.

The Trump administration has been involved in numerous prosecutions of sponsors who are involved in trafficking, border czar Tom Homan told The Daily Signal.

“President Trump has three priorities: Secure the border, which you have the most secure border in history; No. 2, remove public safety threats and national security threats that are illegal; and third, find the children,” Homan said.

“We take it very seriously,” he added.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement needs to investigate every unaccompanied child who crossed the border during the Biden administration to make sure they’re safe, Fabbriatore said. The Biden administration’s “whole process was based on speed to get them into the United States so as fast as they could go to release them out of care,” Fabbriatore said. “The paperwork that was done and the information that was gathered was so abysmal that really we are concerned about every single child that came in under the Biden administration.”

The Office of Refugee Resettlement is knocking on the door of each sponsor to collect DNA samples, fingerprints, and financial records; to perform background checks; and to determine whether the sponsor is suited to care for children.

“Our policy is so much stronger than the policy under the Biden administration now that we can continue to strengthen it as we move forward, to ensure that these children are in a proper environment,” Fabbriatore said.

Among the estimated 448,000 minors to enter the U.S. in recent years, ICE failed to issue more than 233,000 notices to appear in immigration court, according to the inspector general. Furthermore, more than 43,000 migrant children who were given a notice to appear in immigration court failed to do so.

An audit from the inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security found that 31,000 of the children released to a sponsor did not have a proper address where immigration officials could reach them.

“While the last administration prioritized speed over safety, as far as releasing children to sponsors in this country, we are prioritizing safety over speed,”

Gradison said. “And what does that look like in practice? It looks like making sure that the sponsors who come forward to be connected with these unaccompanied children are actually related when they say that they are.”

The Office of Refugee Resettlement is investigating whether children smuggled into the country are being trafficked.

“We need to get into these situations and really interview all the parties involved, interview these children, interview these sponsors,” Fabbriatore said, “and even really look into the work sites that they’re working at to make that determination if they’ve then been trafficked, and if now they’re paying off a debt to these cartels for their own smuggling fees.”

Finding the remaining missing migrant children is a “No. 1 priority” for HHS, Fabbriatore said.

“Although we are doing a great job now under the Trump administration,” he continued, “there’s still a lot of work to do, and we’re not going to rest until we identify every single one of these children within the United States.”