

JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, July 12, 2018

Trump Administration Completes Reunification for Eligible Children Under 5

HHS Secretary Alex Azar, DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued the following joint statement regarding reunification efforts for eligible children under 5 years old:

“Dedicated teams at the Departments of Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Justice have worked tirelessly to ensure the safety of Ms. L class members. As of this morning, the initial reunifications were completed. Throughout the reunification process, our goal has been the well-being of the children and returning them to a safe environment. Our agencies’ careful vetting procedures helped prevent the reunification of children with an alleged murderer, an adult convicted of child cruelty, and adults determined not to be the parent of the child. Of course, there remains a tremendous amount of hard work and similar obstacles facing our teams in reuniting the remaining families. The Trump administration does not approach this mission lightly, and we intend to continue our good faith efforts to reunify families.

“Certain facts remain: The American people gave this administration a mandate to end the lawlessness at the border, and President Trump is keeping his promise to do exactly that. Our message has been clear all along: Do not risk your own life or the life of your child by attempting to enter the United States illegally. Apply lawfully and wait your turn.

“The American immigration system is the most generous in the world, but we are a nation of laws and we intend to continue enforcing those laws. Establishing the immigration system demanded of our political leaders by the American people for more than 30 years—one that serves the national interest—will allow our nation to further realize the foundation of freedom, safety, and prosperity we inherited from our Founders.”

Below are more details on HHS, DHS, and DOJ progress on reunification, as of 7 a.m. EST, July 12, 2018:

There are 103 children under age 5 covered by the court case. Of the 103 children:

- 57 children have been reunified as of 7 a.m. EST on July 12; and
- 46 children were acknowledged by the court to be ineligible for reunification or determined by HHS, DHS, and DOJ to be ineligible under court-approved criteria.

Of those 46 ineligible for reunification:

22 children have been found ineligible due to safety concerns posed by the adults in question:

- 11 adults have a serious criminal history (charges or convictions for child cruelty, kidnapping, murder, human smuggling, domestic violence, etc.);
- 7 adults were determined not to be a parent;
- 1 adult had a falsified birth certificate;
- 1 adult was alleged to have abused the child;
- 1 adult planned to house the child with an adult charged with sexually abusing a child; and
- 1 adult is being treated for a communicable disease.

24 children are not currently eligible for reunification due to circumstances of the adults in question:

- 12 adults have been deported and are being contacted;
- 9 adults are in custody of the United States Marshals Service for other offenses;
- 2 adults are in custody of state jails for other offenses; and
- 1 adult's location has been unknown for over a year.

Component(s):

Executive Office for Immigration Review

Office of the Attorney General

Updated July 12, 2018