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UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO
3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

CO-CHAIR, DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND
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AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,
AND RELATED AGENCIES

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

April 5, 2019

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

On September 28, 2018 the President signed into law the Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2019.¹ Section 234 of the bill states:

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to prevent a Member of the United States Congress from entering, for the purpose of conducting oversight, any facility in the United States, used for purposes of maintaining custody of or otherwise housing unaccompanied alien children (as defined in section 462(g)(2) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. § 279(g)(2))).

Having experienced Members of Congress being denied entry into government-run and government-contracted facilities housing unaccompanied alien children during the summer of 2018, Congress drafted and included Section 234 in the bill to ensure Members would have unencumbered access to such facilities for the purpose of conducting our constitutionally mandated oversight responsibilities. I understand that you intend to deny Representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Donna Shalala and Debbie Mucarsel-Powell from entering the Homestead Office of Refugee Resettlement facility. The representatives intend to visit the facility to conduct oversight of the condition of the facility and care received by the unaccompanied alien children. If the Department of Health and Human Services denies them access, the Department would be in violation of the law.

¹ Public Law No: 115-245.

As the Chair of the Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, I ask that you immediately come into compliance with the law and allow all Members of Congress access to facilities used for purposes of maintaining custody of or otherwise housing unaccompanied alien children immediately upon request.

Please confirm in writing that you will allow Members of Congress access to these facilities, pursuant to Section 234 and other applicable laws – without any requirement that they provide two weeks' notice.

Sincerely,



Rosa L. DeLauro

Chairwoman

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies