



United States Senate

December 26, 2018

Commissioner Kevin K. McAleenan
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to voice my strong concern about the recent deaths and illnesses of children detained in Border Patrol custody, and to request a full accounting and a revised protocol to prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future.

December has been a devastating month for children in Border Patrol custody:

- On December 8, 7-year-old Jakelin Caal Maquin died of dehydration and shock after 36 hours in Border Patrol detention. Jakelin's father reports that she did not receive water and agents did not speak to him in his native language during this time.
- On December 19, a five-month-old infant was hospitalized with pneumonia shortly after her release from Border Patrol custody. The baby's mother reports that the baby was held in a freezing cell and deprived of her prescribed antibiotics.
- Finally, on Christmas Eve, 8-year-old Felipe Alonzo-Gomez died after suffering flu-like symptoms in Border Patrol custody. Before his death, Felipe was detained for well over the permitted 72-hour period. It appears that Felipe was released from the hospital with a fever of 103, and no EMT was on duty to help him.

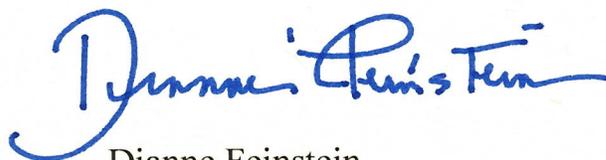
The deaths of Jakelin and Felipe and the denial of basic medicine to an infant are simply unacceptable. As the American Academy of Pediatrics has noted, it is "long past time to re-evaluate immigration agencies' policies and procedures for the care and treatment of children."

To that end, I am requesting a full and transparent account of Felipe Alonzo-Gomez's case, as well as a comprehensive revision of Border Patrol rules to ensure adequate protection for children.

Within 15 days, please provide a response explaining how Border Patrol's rules going forward will ensure adherence to the requirement of the Flores settlement agreement, which requires that children be released from Border Patrol detention within 72 hours. Please also ensure that pediatricians and experts in child welfare are involved in drafting these new rules, and please account for the need to communicate with detainees in their native languages.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator