

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of**

**Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Vice Chair Joseph P. Kennedy III**

***Protecting Unaccompanied Children: The Ongoing Impact of the Trump Administration's  
Cruel Policies***

**September 19, 2019**

Quote: "Every heartbeat hurts." End quote.

Quote: "I can't feel my heart." End quote.

Quote: "Child was under the delusion that his father had been killed and believed he would also be killed." End quote.

These words, included in an inspector general report released earlier this month, tell the sickening story of this Administration's family separation policy.

Kids fleeing unimaginable violence and poverty and destitution, arriving at our border to claim asylum and experiencing trauma in our nation's name.

Think about that for a second. What they had endured. What they had fled. They left a life where gangs indiscriminately killed family members and neighbors. Where meals were scarce, and violence was constant.

And they made it here. The United States of America — this beacon, this shining city, this global light of freedom and hope and opportunity and good. The relief they must have felt to finally see us on the horizon.

Instead, the nightmare continued.

And those children — those babies, those toddlers—they will carry the scars we gave them forever.

To the witnesses here today, you may have objected to heartless policies behind closed doors and argued against such unfathomable cruelty from the confines of your conference rooms, but that doesn't matter. That doesn't count. What matters now is what you do — *what we do* — next. How we take accountability for the profound mental trauma we inflicted on children we should have stopped at nothing to protect.