

Welcome. Today's hearing is long overdue. It is my understanding that this is the first time in over 20 years that the HHS Inspector General has appeared before the Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

This morning's subcommittee hearing is our second Inspector General's hearing. As Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chair, it is my intent to have all Inspector Generals testifying before us on a regular basis.

Today, we will hear from Inspector General Grimm on her office's ongoing oversight work and investigative priorities. We will focus on three critical areas that are plagued with issues and concerns that we must address moving forward.

First and foremost, we will be examining HHS's abject failure to competently manage the record number of unaccompanied minors in the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, abbreviated ORR. The HHS Inspector General's office has done excellent work to shed light on this crisis.

Back in February, we held a hearing on the border in Texas, and as I said at the time, the Biden Administration's policies are the root cause of the border crisis we are experiencing. This only adds to the inhumane conditions experienced by unaccompanied children once they enter ORR care.

The surge of unaccompanied children was an entirely foreseeable result of President Biden's refusal to secure the border. While running for office, President Biden pledged to reduce deportations and end Title 42. This encouraged more migrants and the number of annual unaccompanied minors crossing the border during the Biden Administration grew to astronomical numbers.

From fiscal years 2018 through 2020, ORR averaged around 44,500 referrals per year. In fiscal year 2022, ORR received over 128,900 referrals, almost three times the recent historical average.

According to a report by CBS News, nearly 130,000 migrant children entered the U.S. government's shelter system in fiscal year 2022.¹ These numbers are staggering, and are a direct result of the Biden administration's open border policies.

As the Inspector General has now documented across multiple reports, somehow HHS was caught unprepared for this surge despite it being the natural result of administration policies.

In a desperate attempt to increase capacity, ORR contracted with organizations with no relevant experience in safely caring for unaccompanied children. The result was child neglect and abuse.

In an effort to quickly reduce the number of children in its care, ORR prioritized fast tracking the release of unaccompanied children to sponsors instead of taking the time and effort to thoroughly vet sponsors. The result was putting children at increased risk of being trafficked and exploited. We've all seen the news articles about children working full time in

¹ Camilo Montoya-Galvez, *Nearly 130,000 Unaccompanied Migrant Children Entered the U.S. Shelter System in 2022, a Record*, CBS News (Oct. 14, 2022)

slaughter houses, or as roofers, or other dangerous, inappropriate professions.

In response to this crisis, HHS continues to keep the assembly line of unaccompanied children moving as fast as possible. When whistleblowers raise concerns about children having panic attacks, self-harming, or living in unsuitable conditions, they are retaliated against. HHS denied media access to emergency intake shelters.

The priority seems to be keep this issue out of sight rather than child welfare. It's unconscionable and I want to thank the OIG's office for their work holding HHS accountable.

The second area of focus for our hearing is NIH grant management. There is an increasing body of evidence suggesting that NIH fails to conduct routine oversight of its grantees.

This failure extends to research done in foreign countries involving potential pandemic pathogens, those such as the now infamous grant to EcoHealth Alliance. The Inspector General's audit found that NIH and

EcoHealth failed to effectively monitor and document the activities of subgrantees, including the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

As a result of NIH's failure to secure laboratory notebooks and other records, the U.S government has no adequate documentation of the coronavirus experiments conducted in Wuhan during the fall 2019. This is important because this is when COVID-19 arose!

In light of these oversight failures, it is incomprehensible to me that the NIH continues to fund EcoHealth Alliance. And we still do not have the data from the lab in China with American dollars to study novel coronaviruses.

The final goal for our hearing today is to hear from the Inspector General about their ongoing work on Medicare and Medicaid program integrity.

With the Public Health Emergency now officially over, returning Medicaid to its congressionally intended role as a safety net insurer of last resort is critical. Between fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2021, improper payments grew by over 138%.

From reviewing the Inspector General's body of work on CMS oversight, it is clear that her office takes Medicare and Medicaid program integrity seriously. What is less clear to me is whether HHS and CMS are also committed to preventing fraud, waste, and abuse in these programs.

I look forward to hearing from Inspector General Grimm on these issues and I appreciate her coming to testify before the Subcommittee today.