

Your Community Impact Statement has been successfully submitted to City Council and Committees.

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment at [NCsupport@lacity.org](mailto:NCsupport@lacity.org).

This is an automated response, please do not reply to this email.

#### Contact Information

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The Board approved this CIS by a vote of: Yea(10) Nay(0) Abstain(0) Ineligible(0) Recusal(0)

Date of NC Board Action: 10/06/2020

Type of NC Board Action: For

#### Impact Information

Date: 10/20/2020

Update to a Previous Input: No

Directed To: City Council and Committees

Council File Number: 20-1033

Agenda Date: 10/06/2020

Item Number: K

Summary:

**EAGLE ROCK  
NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

**Executive Committee**

Jesse Saucedo, President  
Richard Loew, Vice President  
Sylvia Denlinger, Treasurer  
Andrew Jacobs, Communications  
Lisa Karahalios, Secretary

**CITY OF  
LOS ANGELES**  
CALIFORNIA



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**COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

October 16, 2020

Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear City Council,

We declare that on October 6, 2020, a Brown Act noticed public meeting was held by the Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council (ERNC) at which a quorum of 10 board members was present and that by a vote of 10-0 the ERNC adopted the following Community Impact Statement in support of Council File 20-1033 Prohibit and Suspend / Certificate of Occupancy / Local Hotels / Housing and Detention / Migrant Children and Families / Private Security Companies / Ordinance

An August 16, 2020 New York Times article brought to light the current administration's use of hotels to detain children before summarily removing them from the United States<sup>1</sup>. The Trump administration is using the emergency situation arising from the COVID 19 pandemic to shutdown the border between Mexico and the US. As a consequence, those individuals coming to the border legally seeking asylum in the US are being turned away. Additionally, adults and children who cross the border and turn themselves into authorities to legally apply for asylum are being summarily returned to their home countries before they are able to make an application for asylum. They are often returned back to harm in violation of international law. "This [system] allows immigration officials to bypass the normal process that would give the children a chance to ask for asylum here."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Caitlin Dickerson, *A Private Security Company Is Detaining Migrant Children at Hotels*, The New York Times, August 16, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/16/us/migrant-children-hotels-coronavirus.html>

<sup>2</sup> Joel Rose and Marisa Peñaloza, *Shadow Immigration System: Migrant Children Detained In Hotels By Private Contractors*, NPR, August 20, 2020 <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/20/904027735/shadow-immigration-system-migrant-children-detained-in-hotels-by-private-contrac>

In 1997, the U.S. government reached an agreement known as the Flores Settlement Agreement (“Settlement”), which arose out of *Flores v. Reno*, a 1987 California case. The Settlement sets standards for detention of children and generally requires that detention of children be minimized. When children are detained, the Settlement requires that they be placed in a non-secure facility holding a license to care for dependent children. In order to get around immigration laws and court settlements pertaining to the detention of children, the New York Times article stated that 806 children had been housed in hotels before being removed from the United States. The children range in age from 1 to 17. The program is being run by a private firm that is not licensed to deal with children. Detaining children with the use of private contractors in this manner is illegal, and puts children at risk of harm. In effect, what has been created is “a largely unregulated shadow system of detention and swift expulsions without the safeguards that are intended to protect the most vulnerable migrants.”

According to recent court filings seeking to enforce the Settlement, children are being held in hotels for between 4 and 19 days. Four and five-year-old children have been held for up to 2 weeks in hotels.<sup>3</sup> They are denied access to legal counsel, they are not told they have a right to speak to an attorney or make phone calls to an attorney. Many of these children are victims of human trafficking only to suffer what amounts to trafficking by the US government. A recent statement by the American Pediatric Association states that, “This practice is traumatizing to children who have already endured so much, who are not old enough to have made their own decisions about how to arrive at our border, and who cannot communicate their fears and needs.”<sup>4</sup> The harm children suffer can clearly be seen in the statement made by a 16 year old boy who had been detained for weeks in a hotel in El Paso, “I felt locked up. I felt alone and isolated . . . I didn’t know what time of day it was. I didn’t know what day it was. I felt utterly disconnected from society. I just felt anxiety and depression.”<sup>5</sup>

Major hotel chains across the nation have participated in this program including Best Western, Econo Lodge, Comfort Suites, Hampton Inn & Suites, and Quality Suites. Here in Los

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<sup>3</sup> *Flores v. Barr*, Notice of Motion and Motion to Enforce Settlement Re “Title 42” Class Members. September 4, 2020.  
[https://youthlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/920\\_Motion-to-Enforce-Settlement-re-Title-42-Class-Members.pdf](https://youthlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/920_Motion-to-Enforce-Settlement-re-Title-42-Class-Members.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Sally Goza, *AAP Statement on Media Reports of Immigrant Children Being Detained in Hotels*, Am. Acad. Pediatrics, July 23, 2020  
<https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2020/aap-statement-on-media-reports-of-immigrant-children-being-detained-in-hotels/>

<sup>5</sup> Hamed Aleaziz, “I Felt Alone”: The Story Of How An Immigrant Teenager Fought To Stay In The US While Under Guard In A Texas Hotel, BUZZFEED, July 24, 2020,  
<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/immigrantteenager-successfully-fights-to-stay-in-us>.

Angeles at a Best Western Plus in Chinatown, 102 children were held before being removed. In our community of Eagle Rock, Comfort Inn operates a hotel. We strongly oppose any children or migrants of any age being held at this hotel or any other hotels in the city of Los Angeles.

The City of Los Angeles has declared itself a City of Sanctuary and has reaffirmed police policies that officers will not initiate police action with the purpose of determining immigration status, will not honor ICE Detainer requests, and will not deputize local police officers as immigration officers, the City must also denounce and oppose the Trump Administration's inhumane and cruel policies and practices attacking immigrant children and families. There should be absolutely no tolerance for this in the City of Los Angeles, or anywhere in the entire country.

The ERNC supports Council File 20-1033, requesting that the City Attorney prepare and present an ordinance that would prohibit, and suspend, any certificate of occupancy for any hotel in Los Angeles which is being used to house and detain migrant children and families under the direction of private security companies.

Please place this letter in the case file, and acknowledge its receipt via email to: **executive@ernc.la**. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Jesse Saucedo

President, Eagle Rock Neighborhood Council

cc: Office of Councilmember Gilbert Cedillo

Jose Hernandez, Field Deputy, CD14 NELA Field Office

Sarah Flaherty, Transition Team, Councilmember-Elect Kevin de León