

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

August 10, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAILMarcella Burke
Chairman
Burke Law Group
1000 Main St, Ste 2300
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Ms. Burke,

I write to request records and information regarding the recent plan to award a no-bid cooperative agreement of up to \$150 million to the Burke Law Group to represent detained unaccompanied migrant children in their immigration proceedings.¹ Your status as a former Trump appointee at the Environmental Protection Agency and the Interior Department,² the Trump Administration's continued use of no-bid awards to steer taxpayer dollars to President Trump's friends, family, and associates,³ and the Trump Administration's stunning disregard for the welfare of children in immigration enforcement⁴ all raise significant concerns about this agreement and the Burke Law Group's qualifications to undertake this important work. The Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI or "the Subcommittee") is conducting ongoing inquiries into both the Trump Administration's continuing immigration abuses and the Trump Administration's corrupt use of no-bid awards. I request that you immediately provide information and records to allow the Subcommittee to assess whether this cooperative agreement is yet another waste of taxpayer dollars meant to harm immigrant children.

My concerns are compounded by the Burke Law Group's apparent utter lack of qualifications for this work, logistical questions, potential conflicts of interest, and the price tag. Until last week, the representation of unaccompanied migrant children in immigration proceedings was carried out by nearly 100 legal aid providers across the country through a contract with the

¹ Ted Hesson, *Trump-linked law firm to get \$150 million no-bid contract to represent migrant children*, Wash. Post (Aug. 6, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/08/06/trump-linked-law-firm-get-150-million-no-bid-contract-represent-migrant-children/>.

² *Id.*

³ *See, e.g.*, Letter from the Hon. Richard Blumenthal, Ranking Member, S. Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations to the Hon. Doug Burgum, Sec. of the Interior, and Jessica Bowron, Acting Director, NPS (June 9, 2026), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026-06-09-Letter-from-Ranking-Member-Blumenthal-to-Secretary-Burgum-and-Acting-Director-Bowron.pdf>.

⁴ *See, e.g.*, Press Release, Blumenthal Delivers Opening Statement at Forum on How DHS Policies Hurt Children (March 24, 2026), <https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/videoblumenthal-deliversopening-statement-at-forum-on-how-dhs-policies-hurt-children>.

government.⁵ Those groups had decades of experience in immigration law and trauma-informed representation of children.⁶ By contrast, the Burke Law Group appears to consist of 26 lawyers and paralegals, only 2 of whom appear to have any experience in immigration work more generally and asylum specifically.⁷ Nothing indicates that Burke Law Group has either the proficiency or capacity to administer essential legal services at scale to children whose cases require highly specialized expertise.

Given the Burke Law Group's close ties with the Trump Administration, it also begs the question of whether your attorneys will truly be able to advocate impartially on behalf of these vulnerable children in proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services—proceedings in which the interests of the Trump Administration will often be in opposition to those of unaccompanied migrant children.

Then, there is the question of logistics. As the firm likely knows, unaccompanied migrant children in federal Office of Refugee Resettlement custody are currently detained in shelters across the nation. The Burke Law Group, however, is only located in eight locations. I am concerned that this award may reflect a plan to consolidate detained unaccompanied children in Texas, even though Texas is one of three states that refuse to license ORR facilities, leaving those facilities without essential independent oversight that helps protect the welfare of children detained there.

I am likewise unclear as to how a law firm of 26 lawyers in eight locations will service such a vast volume of clients previously served by 100 legal aid providers across the nation. I also cannot understand the potential \$150 million price tag for legal services solely while children remain in ORR custody—a subset of the services performed under the prior contract for services both in ORR custody and post release—by a single law firm, particularly given the firm's business model: “[s]ince the firm does not have human resources and administrative teams, it can charge its clients less for its services.”⁸

So that the Subcommittee can understand why the Burke Law Group is qualified for this \$150 million cooperative agreement servicing detained unaccompanied migrant children, please provide the following information by August 24, 2026:

⁵ *A \$150M contract for migrant kids' lawyers goes to a Trump-linked Texas firm, raising concerns*, Associated Press (Aug. 6, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/150m-contract-migrant-kids-lawyers-goes-trump-linked-texas-firm-raisin-rcna591128>.

⁶ See Hesson, *supra* note 1.

⁷ See Burke Law Group, *Our Team*, <https://burkegroup.law/our-team/>.

⁸ Sigurd Neubauer, *Marcella Burke is bullish on America and entrepreneurship*, Man & Culture Magazine (Nov. 1, 2024), <https://manandculture.com/2024/11/marcella-burke-is-bullish-on-america-and-entrepreneurship/>.

1. Please provide the number of immigration proceedings⁹ which the Burke Law Group participated in for the past five years and describe the proceeding and the firm's role.
2. Please list any attorneys at the Burke Law Firm who have ever participated in an immigration proceeding in any capacity.
3. Please list any experience and qualifications among Burke Law Group attorneys in providing trauma-informed representation to detained unaccompanied children.
4. Please describe how the Burke Law Firm arrived at \$150 million as the amount for its cooperative agreement to represent detained unaccompanied migrant children in their immigration court proceedings.

Please also provide the Subcommittee with the following records¹⁰ by August 24, 2026:

1. Records regarding the calculation of up to \$150 million as the amount of the Burke Law Group's cooperative agreement to provide legal services to unaccompanied migrant children while they are in ORR custody.
2. Communications¹¹ regarding the awarding of the \$150 million cooperative agreement, including but not limited to communications with the Executive Office of the President, President Trump, or the Department of Health and Human Services.
3. Communications regarding how clients will be serviced in locations where Burke Law Group attorneys are not located and potential plans to consolidate detained unaccompanied children in Texas.

Please contact the Subcommittee if you have questions about responding to this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

⁹ Immigration proceedings include proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, in addition to proceedings touching on immigration matters in state or federal court.

¹⁰ For purposes of this request, "records" include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), direct messages, chats, calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

¹¹ For purposes of this request, "communications" include any records, as defined above, transmitted in any way between two or more individuals or entities.

Marcella Burke
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Richard Blumenthal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Blumenthal" clearly legible.

Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman