



Galveston-Houston Immigrant  
Representation Project

## **GHIRP Advocates for the Immediate Reinstatement of Legal Services and Protections for Immigrant Children**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 19, 2025 | Contact: [info@ghirp.org](mailto:info@ghirp.org)**

**HOUSTON** – [Alexa Sendukas](#), Immigrant Children and Youth (ICY) Managing Attorney at the [Galveston-Houston Immigrant Representation Project \(GHIRP\)](#), issued the following statement in response to the Stop Work Order (SWO) by the Department of the Interior, immediately halting services under the federally funded Unaccompanied Children Program:

Our ICY team proudly advocates for unaccompanied children and youth, and we specialize in providing child-friendly and trauma-informed legal services for detained and released children. Our work through the [Acacia Center for Justice](#) is critical to protecting these children's due process rights guaranteed by law.

The Stop Work Order instructing our team to immediately stop representing our child clients and to cease providing legal services to detained children is unprecedented. These services have a proven track record of helping the most vulnerable navigate a notoriously complex immigration system. Simply put, there is no child's version of immigration court, no matter their age, and children without an attorney face the impossible task of meeting exceptionally high legal standards alone. Abruptly halting legal and social services for children will have profound and devastating consequences, placing children in more dangerous or exploitative situations.

**Regardless of funding, we have ethical obligations to our clients and will not stop fighting for them. We must accompany our clients to their court hearings, prepare applications and evidence to meet our filing deadlines, and help them fight for their rights in the United States. We will not break the promises we made to them.**

Over the past four years, GHIRP staff have provided Know Your Rights (KYR) presentations and individual legal screenings to more than 4,000 detained children; we have represented more than 300 individuals in their immigration cases; and our team has connected 350 children and families to critical social services support. Among the clients we have successfully represented with this funding are two teenage girls who survived sex trafficking, a six-year-old child with intellectual disabilities who won asylum, multiple LGBTQ+ youth persecuted for their sexual orientation, and numerous children who were abused, abandoned, or neglected by their parents.

We remain unwavering in our commitment to protect and defend unaccompanied children, and we will always stand with our clients. Politicizing child safety and well-being is antithetical to our community values. Congress must act, and the public must condemn this unlawful, unethical, and arbitrary action. We encourage our supporters to make their voices heard, and we welcome your contributions to back us in this fight.