



Iowa LULAC supports efforts to help children fleeing violence in Central America

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NEW YORK CITY – The League of United Latin American Citizens of Iowa has announced its support of National LULAC's effort to assist the thousands of unaccompanied children who have fled violence in Central America and have sought refuge in the United States.

Iowa LULAC State Director Joe Enriquez Henry, who is at the 85th Annual LULAC National Convention & Exposition in New York City until Sunday, said Iowa's councils support efforts to assist the children.

"These children have fled horrifying conditions," he said. "It is our duty to assist them in any way possible. We will join with other LULAC councils and our national office to provide the support necessary to ensure these children are safe. We cannot allow this continue on our watch."

In Iowa, LULAC Council 10 in eastern Iowa is part of a group working with Davenport Mayor Bill Gluba, who wants to organize a community-wide effort to assist the Central American children. Gluba has organized a "Caring Cities Campaign," which would make Davenport a safe haven for the children who are currently being detained in the southern U.S. border states.

The group is currently in the process of receiving more information from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services about how to proceed.

Enriquez Henry said he is hopeful that LULAC National President Margaret Moran's announcement at the national convention, which draws more than 20,000 Hispanics each year, will force more action from the federal government.

Moran announced on Thursday that LULAC had formed a coalition of corporations, nonprofit organizations and concerned citizens who would provide financial and material resources for these children who are currently being held in overcrowded conditions. She described the situation as a "humanitarian crisis."

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“These children, desperately seeking safety in the U.S., deserve to be treated humanely,” Moran said. “If Congress won’t act, we will.”

President Barack Obama has requested emergency funds to assist these minors; however, National LULAC is concerned Congressional partisan politics may prevent aid from arriving in time.

LULAC leaders said there is a need to act quickly. The children are staying in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in detention centers. These centers are in need of essential resources such as diapers, blankets, cots and soap.

Founded in 1929, the League of United Latin American Citizens is the oldest Latino civil rights organization in the United States. There are more than 2 million members in more than 1,000 local LULAC councils, which hold voter registration drives, provide awareness to residents about language and immigration issues, sponsor programs and advocate for Latinos.

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