

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 22, 2017

Chairman Bob Goodlatte
House Judiciary Committee
2309 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Jerrold Nadler
House Judiciary Committee
2109 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Ranking Member Nadler,

We write today with grave concerns about court filings that revealed Trump Administration officials denied a seventeen-year-old immigrant woman (“Jane Poe”), who is a victim of rape, her right to have an abortion. We request that the Judiciary Committee subpoena officials within the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), including Director Scott Lloyd, for immediate questioning about this deeply troubling incident.

The relevant court filings (Case 1:17-cv-02122-TSC, Document 87) include a memo written by ORR Director Scott Lloyd outlining the Administration’s decision to deny Jane Poe an abortion. Lloyd’s memo reveals that he was aware that Jane Poe informed ORR officials that she was sexually assaulted in her home country, and that the assault likely resulted in her pregnancy. Lloyd also acknowledges that “at least one senior program staff” at ORR recommended that Poe be allowed to have an abortion. Nevertheless, Lloyd decided to deny the abortion because he was “convinced that an abortion in this case [was] not in her best interest.” He overtly assumes that he, rather than Jane Poe, was in the best position to decide her future.

The Constitution guarantees women the right to access abortion and prohibits the government from putting an undue burden on that right. We are strongly opposed to ORR’s unconstitutional policy of denying abortion to undocumented minors. Indeed, ORR’s decisions denying abortion have now been overturned in federal court multiple times. Aside from being unconstitutional, the ongoing efforts by ORR staff to intimidate and scare young women out of exercising their rights are also offensive and highly inappropriate for any government official, let alone senior officials in the Trump Administration.

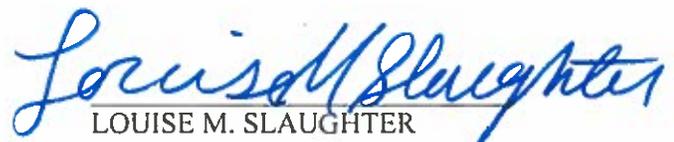
The new details about the circumstances surrounding Jane Poe, however, raise even more questions about the ORR policy that demand immediate answers from Mr. Lloyd. According to these court filings, the Trump Administration attempted to force a rape victim to carry a pregnancy to term against her will. This is an egregious, unconscionable violation of Jane Poe’s right to make this decision. We fear that other women currently in detention may be facing similar injustices at the hands of Trump Administration officials.

In order to prevent more women from being denied their rights, ORR’s policies and decision to deny Jane Poe an abortion need urgent and close examination and oversight by Congress. We strongly urge the Judiciary Committee to question Mr. Lloyd immediately when Congress returns in January.

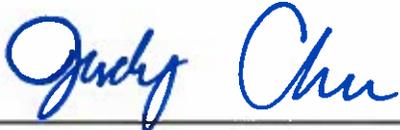
Sincerely,



DIANA DEGETTE
Co-Chair
Pro-Choice Caucus



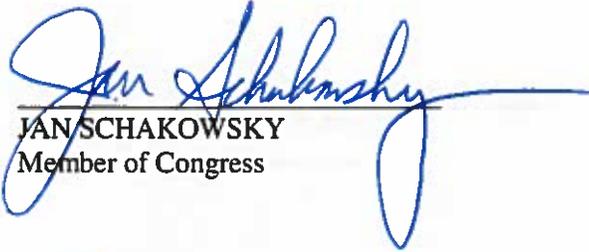
LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
Co-Chair
Pro-Choice Caucus



JUDY CHU
Member of Congress



KATHERINE CLARK
Member of Congress



JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress



SUZAN DELBENE
Member of Congress



BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress



JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress