



LULAC of ILLINOIS
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Magdalena Rivera, Ed.D., IL State Director

April 21, 2020

Honorable J.B. Pritzker
Governor of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), I write to appeal to you for the immediate release, on humanitarian grounds, of the unaccompanied minors being held at the Heartland Alliance shelter for detained immigrant youth in Chicago. It is critical that this authorization be granted and acted upon with expediency because of the urgent health threat posed by COVID-19.

An investigative report published on April 14, 2020 by ProPublica states:

At least 19 children and two employees at a Chicago shelter for immigrant youth have tested positive for COVID-19 in recent days, in what appears to be the largest outbreak of the virus in the country in shelters for unaccompanied minors.

According to an email sent to staff Sunday, Heartland Human Care Services officials said the first positive test results were reported at its Bronzeville shelter on Friday and that additional cases there were confirmed over the weekend.

The complete article can be viewed here: <https://www.propublica.org/article/at-least-19-children-at-a-chicago-shelter-for-immigrant-detainees-have-tested-positive-for-covid-19>

LULAC knows of your commitment to civil rights and social justice and can only conclude that you have not yet acted on this matter because your office has not been apprised of the very dire situation. It is inconceivable to us how an Illinois state-licensed facility responsible for the safety and well-being of minors has not already taken the prudent action to release these youths. LULAC urges you to demand that they be turned over to family members or caretakers not associated with Heartland without delay; and that all necessary testing and treatment for COVID-19 be provided at no cost..

Please advise me of your actions at your earliest opportunity and count on our continued interest in this matter. In the interim, I can be reached directly by cellphone at (815)995-0300 or via email at magalucia2012@gmail.com. Let me know how LULAC can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Maggie Rivera, Ed.D.
State Director, Illinois LULAC

CC: Domingo Garcia
LULAC National President