

July 16, 2019

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on The Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doug Collins
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on The Judiciary
1504 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

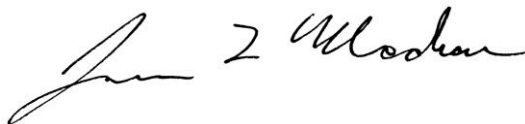
Dear Chairman Nadler and Ranking Member Collins:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to offer our support for passage of H.R. 3239, the “Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act,” and urge the committee to quickly pass this important piece of legislation. As the largest professional association for physicians and the umbrella organization for state and national medical specialty societies, the AMA has been, and continues to be, deeply committed to ensuring the health and safety of all individuals regardless of immigration status.

We believe that conditions in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody are inconsistent with evidence-based recommendations for appropriate care and treatment of children and pregnant women. Conditions in CBP facilities, which include open toilets, constant light exposure, insufficient food and water, extreme temperatures, and forcing pregnant women and children to sleep on cement floors, are traumatizing. Such facilities are simply not appropriate places for children or for pregnant women. H.R. 3239 takes a critical step toward ensuring that appropriate medical and mental health screening and care are provided to all individuals including immigrant children and pregnant women in CBP custody.

Families seeking refuge in the U.S. already endure emotional and physical stress, which is only exacerbated when they are separated from one another or held in family detention facilities during the pendency of their immigration proceedings. It is well known that childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences created by inhumane treatment often create negative health impacts that can last an individual’s entire lifespan. We, along with numerous other medical and mental health organizations, have previously offered our [strong support](#) for passage of H.R. 3239, and urge Members of Congress and the Administration to ensure that this type of legislation is included as part of any humanitarian response to the situation at the southern border.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD