

Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins released the following statement in regards to unaccompanied minors being sheltered in Dallas County:

"Everyone's focus should remain on getting a COVID vaccine, defeating COVID-19 and addressing the problems from our failed power grid. The federal operations will not affect our community other than to provide opportunities to help some children. Conversely, getting our community vaccinated, defeating COVID-19 and ensuring the power grid collapse and its overcharges are fixed will be transformative.

The federal government has leased space for a federal turnkey humanitarian operation. There will be some limited opportunities for volunteerism, ministry, and donation but not at a cost to local taxpayers. The children are unaccompanied minors, ages 15-17, who were being kept in small holding cells at the border not designed to incarcerate people for more than a few hours. Federal law requires that unaccompanied minor children be held in the least restrictive means possible. The transfer to a temporary facility at the convention center will provide opportunities for exercise and socialization for children who have already faced incredible trauma. These children are made in the image of God, very similar to my 15-year-old daughter and your relatives of that age.

North Texas is a place of compassion, and I expect that will hold true for these children in their brief time here. People should not be afraid of the children. They are held in the federal facility without interaction with persons outside the facility.

Now is not the time to politicize the plight of these children to distract from the state's failures to provide vaccine or protect the power grid. Politicians who do so are not worthy of your attention. Now is a time to stay focused on the challenges facing our community that you play a critical part in determining. Get vaccinated. Wear a mask. Hold politicians responsible to fix the power grid, reset rates, and pay for the damage they caused.

There is work to be done to fix our broken immigration system. Traumatized kids are not a proxy for this issue or anyone's viewpoint. I hope you'll join me in praying for and holding elected officials accountable for a just resolution to the longstanding failures of our broken immigration policy and to the challenges facing refugees and immigrants. Then, unless you feel called to donate, volunteer or minister to these children, wish the children well and stay focused on our shared goal of defeating COVID-19 and fixing the power grid."