



SENATOR JOSÉ MENÉNDEZ DISTRICT 26

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Senator José Menéndez Condemns Border Agents' Detention and Inhumane Treatment of 10-year-old Disabled Girl

San Antonio, Texas – Senator José Menéndez condemns today's ruling by a federal judge denying the release 10-year-old Rosa Maria Hernandez, who suffers from cerebral palsy and has been illegally detained by U.S. immigration officials.

The nightmare began on Oct. 24 as the medical transport vehicle taking Rosa Maria to a Corpus Christi hospital for emergency surgery passed through a U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint. Although she was in the company of her adult cousin, a U.S. citizen, the border agents targeted the young girl that was brought to the U.S. from Mexico as an infant by her parents, who are undocumented. It is not clear why the agents would expect a child on her way to a gallbladder operation to have her "papers." Nevertheless, they pursued her vehicle to Driscoll Children's Hospital, waited outside her hospital room during her surgery, then arrested her without a warrant. She was then sent to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in San Antonio, which is not equipped to care for a child with critical medical needs. Rosa Maria is alone, terrified and separated from her parents, despite her doctor's directive that she be cared for by her parents who are accustomed to handling her special needs.

This appalling abuse of power will not be tolerated or ignored. Rosa Maria's mental and physical health remains at risk every day she is separated from her family. Sen. Menéndez joins the legions of public officials, legal experts, and individuals across the country who are demanding this innocent child be treated with dignity and allowed to be with her family. We support the lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union challenging the many violations against Rosa Maria's basic rights as a minor, a person with a disability, and an individual entitled to due process.

The following quote is attributed to Senator José Menéndez:

"Rosa Maria is a child with serious medical conditions who deserves to be treated with compassion, not like a violent outlaw. As a father, I understand the family's sense of urgency in trying to save their daughter from this devastating situation. She must be given the chance to recover from the trauma and cruelty that she has been subjected to at the hands of border officials acting far outside their authority. These actions are shameful and we are appalled that billions of taxpayer dollars are being used for this type of political grandstanding instead of pursuing truly dangerous criminals threatening our national security."

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