



Unaccompanied Minors Released to Sponsors in Texas: Tarrant County

Alliance for a Safe Texas
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Is Your Zip Code on the List? The Startling Number of Unaccompanied Alien Children Released in Tarrant County by Zip Code

Much of the focus of the ongoing border crisis remains on the unprecedented number of encounters with illegal aliens and the impact of deadly drugs pouring into the country. However, one of the other issues that significantly impact every area in Texas as a ramification resulting from the unparalleled travesty is the sheer number of unaccompanied minors, or unaccompanied alien children (UAC), and the impacts these numbers have on local communities and the state.

Since 2021, over 400,000 unaccompanied minors have been released to sponsors in the United States. Over [58,000 UACs have been released to sponsors residing in Texas](#), far more than any other state. These startling numbers have a dramatic impact felt across the state, from increased probability of child trafficking cases across Texas communities to impact on schools, healthcare systems, and the burden to taxpayers.

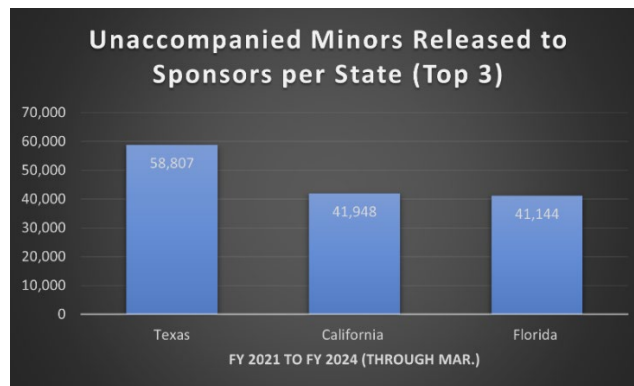


Chart: Alliance for a Safe Texas

Source: ORR

Reviewing the Numbers

Houston, the DFW area, and San Antonio are the top locations for trafficking cases in the state, with [35% of sexual exploitation cases in Texas occurring in DFW](#). Sadly, these metroplex areas are also the top locations where UACs are released in the state, with my home county, Tarrant, ranking fourth. Since fiscal year 2021, more than 2,600 unaccompanied minors have been released to sponsors residing in the county, according to the agency overseeing the care of UACs, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

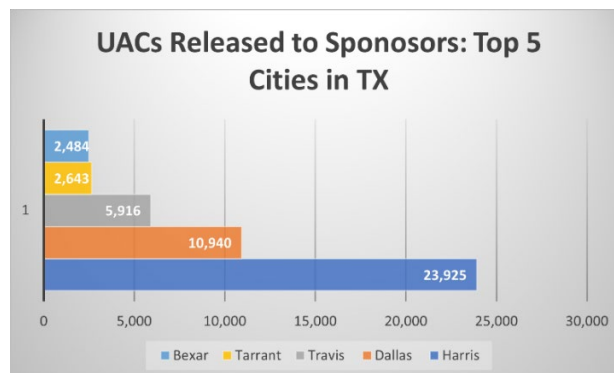


Chart: Alliance for a Safe Texas

*FY 21- Mar. FY24

Source: ORR

The New York Times (NYT) recently released the expansive data obtained from Health and Human Services (HHS) of UACs released per zip code from 2015 through May 2023. I will break down the data by county as best as my time allows so citizens and officials can better understand how their areas are directly impacted. While HHS and ORR have tracked the number of unaccompanied minors released to sponsors since 2015, more than 62% of the releases in Tarrant County have occurred under the Biden Administration.

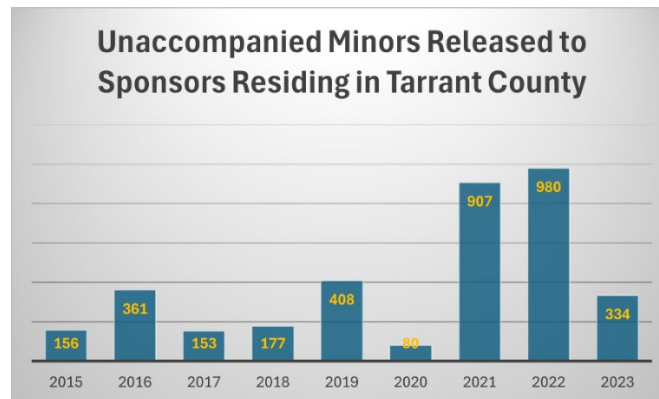


Chart: Alliance for a Safe Texas *2023 data only through May Source: NYT

Concern of Trafficking

Similar to escalated vulnerabilities to trafficking seen with children in the foster care system, it is well-known that unaccompanied minors are at high risk of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. As I testified to Congress last year, many of the children claim they do not know or have never met their alleged sponsors and, in some cases, are told by complete strangers whom to ask for when they arrive. Numerous investigations from Congress, reporting by the New York Times and other media outlets, a statewide Florida Grand Jury, and Oversight agencies have found multiple cases of abuse, neglect, and trafficking, and those whom federal agencies and their contractors have simply lost track of.

A briefing by the European Parliament stated that the European Federation for Missing and Sexually Exploited Children [“holds evidence that each year tens of thousands of migrant children go missing after arriving in Europe.”](#) Previously mentioned evidence suggested the same is occurring in the U.S., and several agencies agree that the opportunity for abuse, exploitation, and trafficking [increases when UACs are released to sponsors who are not their parents.](#)

In response, during the 88th regular session, Alliance for a Safe Texas worked with state legislators to gather support for the call of a state-level investigation, like that done in Florida, with a bi-partisan supported letter by Representative Stan Kitzman leading the way, regarding the concerning allegations which the Texas Legislature could and should take up during the current interim charges.

Using the data released by the NYT, Alliance for a Safe Texas identified and disseminated the information regarding UACs released to sponsors residing in Tarrant. The data further substantiates our concerns, and the percentage of minors released to parental sponsors has

decreased while those released to non-parental sponsors have dramatically increased under the Biden Administration.

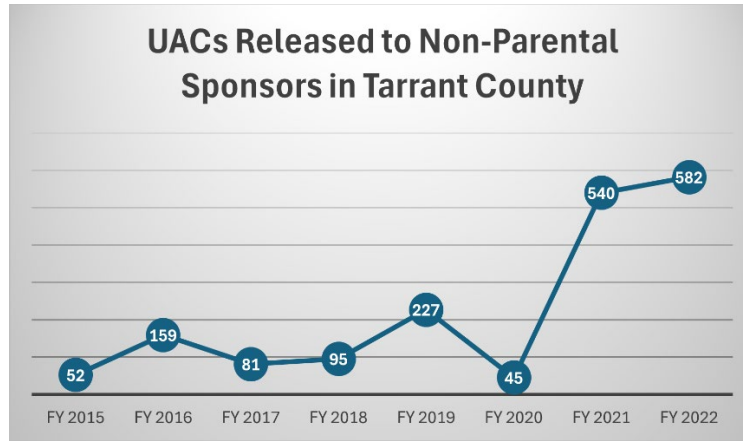


Chart: Alliance for a Safe Texas

Source: New York Times

A total of 17 countries were identified as the country of origin for the UACs released to sponsors in Tarrant from 2021 to 2023 (through May 2023), with Honduras (1,250), El Salvador (432), and Guatemala (336) as the top 3 originated countries UACs are reportedly from. Of the 2,221 reported minors released in Tarrant from 2021 to May 2023, 1,376 were male, and 845 were female.

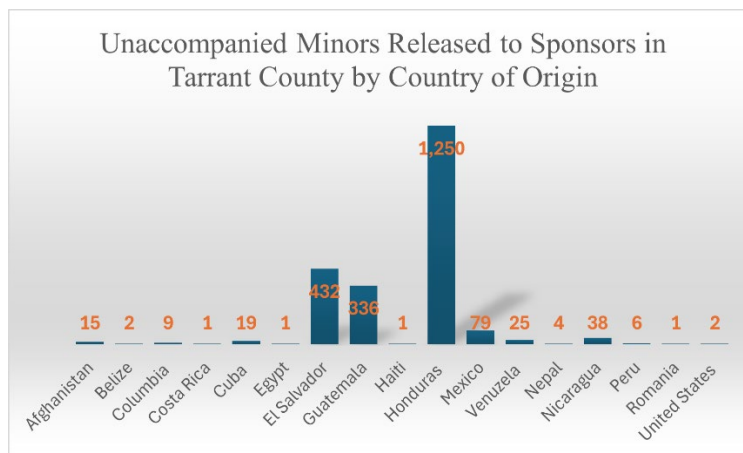


Chart: Alliance for a Safe Texas

Source: New York Times

Impacts on Local Community

A data brief from [Tarrant County officials](#) reported that 755 patients were identified from 2020-2022 as potential trafficking victims based on data provided by JPS Health Network. Twenty-four alleged victims were of the 13-17 age range. The brief further outlines that of the reported cases in Texas from 2017-2021 data by the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH), gender and citizenship status remained high factors for trafficking cases.

Another report by Tarrant County officials detailing 2021 data on abuse and neglect cases cited 6,511 children as confirmed victims. The question remains: how many, if any, of those reported trafficking and abuse cases from 2021 to the present were once unaccompanied minors who were released to abusive sponsors? Unfortunately, such detailed demographics are not publicly reported. However, one thing is for sure, as cases of assault, rapes, and trafficking continue to spike in Texas and [across the country](#), the unprecedented number of UACs certainly is a factor that is not necessarily tracked but needs to be so officials and lawmakers can better address the issues.

The Financial Costs

The financial burden of trafficking and public school systems for the county and the state is immense. According to a study conducted by [The University of Texas at Austin](#) in 2016, the cost of child trafficking is approximately \$6.6 billion.

Additionally, according to an [analysis of the 2023/2024 school year](#), the estimated cost by local and state funding for a single Texas public school student is \$10,387. Unaccompanied minors, by definition, are school-age and, as required by law, should be enrolled unless they have previously graduated from school in their country of origin, which would be challenging to validate. Utilizing the data provided by ORR of 2,643 UACs released in Tarrant County since fiscal 2021 the approximate expense would equate to over \$27 million in costs for a single year of education funded with local and state taxpayer dollars. As a reminder, these estimates are only for the unprecedented numbers of UACs and do not include the costs for children in family units that have settled in Tarrant.

Is your zip code listed as a location where UACs were released to sponsors from 2021 to May 2023? Check below.

Action Item: What can YOU do?

First, share this information by clicking the share button. Please share it on social media with friends, family, and neighbors. Send to your local elected officials: city council, county commissioner, state legislators, and congressional members. Second: Contact the offices of Governor Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, Speaker Phelan, and your state legislators and tell them you support the call for a state-level investigation and interim hearings on the issue.

Local Breakdown: By Zip Code

Zip Codes in Tarrant County with the Highest Number of Released UACs to Sponsors

Zip Code	Number of UACs
76010	387
76119	191
75051	187
76011	179
75050	169
76112	153

76103	151
76105	143
76104	127
76053	126

Don't see your zip code in the chart above? Check to see if your zip code is on the list below.

- 75050
- 75051
- 75052
- 76001
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