News

Minors from Honduras are picked up by a U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent in Eagle

Minors from Honduras are picked up by a U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent in Eagle Pass, Texas, July 25, 2022. (CNS photo/Go Nakamura, Reuters)



Rhina Guidos

View Author Profile

Catholic News Service

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

Washington — July 27, 2022

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

New York's Catholic Charities has spoken out against what it called a "chaotic approach" to dealing with asylum-seekers coming into the country who are being sent from Texas officials by bus to cities around the nation.

"The current chaotic approach is not in the best interest of those seeking protection from violence and other crises in their own countries, nor the good of our own country," Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, said in a July 22 statement.

Cities such as New York and Washington have been on the receiving end of an influx of migrants being bused from the southern border to cities in the Northeast in what some say is a stunt by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican with presidential aspirations.

Abbott, however, calls it a "mission" to prove to federal officials in Washington "how difficult the task is" to take in migrants at the local level.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams called July 19 for federal help, saying "New York has experienced a sharp increase in asylum-seekers from Latin America and other regions," which had resulted in the city receiving 2,800 additional people into its shelter system "over the last few weeks."

In his statement, Sullivan said he was "deeply concerned about the current state of policies that have resulted in thousands of asylum-seekers being bused throughout the United States without proper planning."

Catholic Charities in New York was doing everything possible to help those in their midst, he said, but the agency needs federal help.

"Over the past weeks, asylum-seekers have arrived often hungry, tired and in need of basic items. In New York, Catholic Charities has responded to this crisis promptly, professionally and compassionately," he said.

"Those who have come to our offices and parishes have been provided with emergency assistance, food, basic clothing items, toiletries, as well as critical information on shelter and medical resources," the priest said. "Many have appointments with immigration officials in the upcoming months and our legal services staff is beginning to review their situations."

Advertisement

The nation's capital also has seen a similar influx and Catholic Charities at the Archdiocese of Washington also has helped.

But in a July 15 letter, Msgr. John J. Enzler, the agency's president and CEO, said that while it had helped those who arrived in the nation's capital in April until early June, "our ongoing response was not sustainable from a staffing and resource perspective,

given our many other programs and services."

"We strongly encouraged local and federal government to step up," he said.

The Center Square online publication said Abbott has spent $2.9 million from the state's coffers to bus the migrants.

Lt. Chris Olivarez, spokesperson for the Texas Department of Public Safety - South Texas Region, said other localities are now "experiencing only a fraction of what these smaller border communities face every single day, when you have anywhere from 2,000 to 3,000 migrants crossing the border daily in those areas."

He made the comments in a news release from the governor's office.

Catholic Charities in New York said it was "prepared to work in partnership with the government, and others to advance appropriate policies and programs" to help the vulnerable.

Adams also said New York was willing to help, especially because it has a legacy of welcome, but it needs federal resources to do so.

He also said that while in some cases it appeared the migrants were being bused in by "Texas and Arizona governments. ... In other cases, it appears that individuals are being sent by the federal government."