



NEWS RELEASE

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The State of Arizona has become the destination for hundreds of unaccompanied minors from across Central America. Within the past week, it became an issue with local impact for the City of Tucson and Pima County.

From all accounts the situation is going to continue. Now is not the time for us to sit and wait in a reactive posture.

I applaud Bishop Kicanas, Supervisor Elias and Council Member Romero for their efforts to get ahead of the issue and work with local and Federal agencies to address the needs that already exist in our community. Their work points us as a region in the right direction.

At our most recent City Council meeting we adopted the City of Tucson Emergency Operations Plan. That plan provides the framework for a coordinated response before, during and after an emergency that affects the City of Tucson. It catalyzes City of Tucson interaction with Regional, State and Federal agencies, as well as with Non-Governmental Organizations. The intent of the Plan is to *coordinate* a response through the effective combination of resources that each agency can bring to bear on the emergency.

It's time for the Mayor and City Manager to activate the Emergency Operations Response team and begin proper coordination of Local, Regional, State and Federal assets before we lose the ability to effectively deal with local conditions in a humane manner. That team should seriously weigh the option of a Mayoral Declaration of Emergency to be forwarded to the Pima County Office of Emergency Management if it concludes that is needed to attract the proper level of involvement from the State and Federal Government.

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