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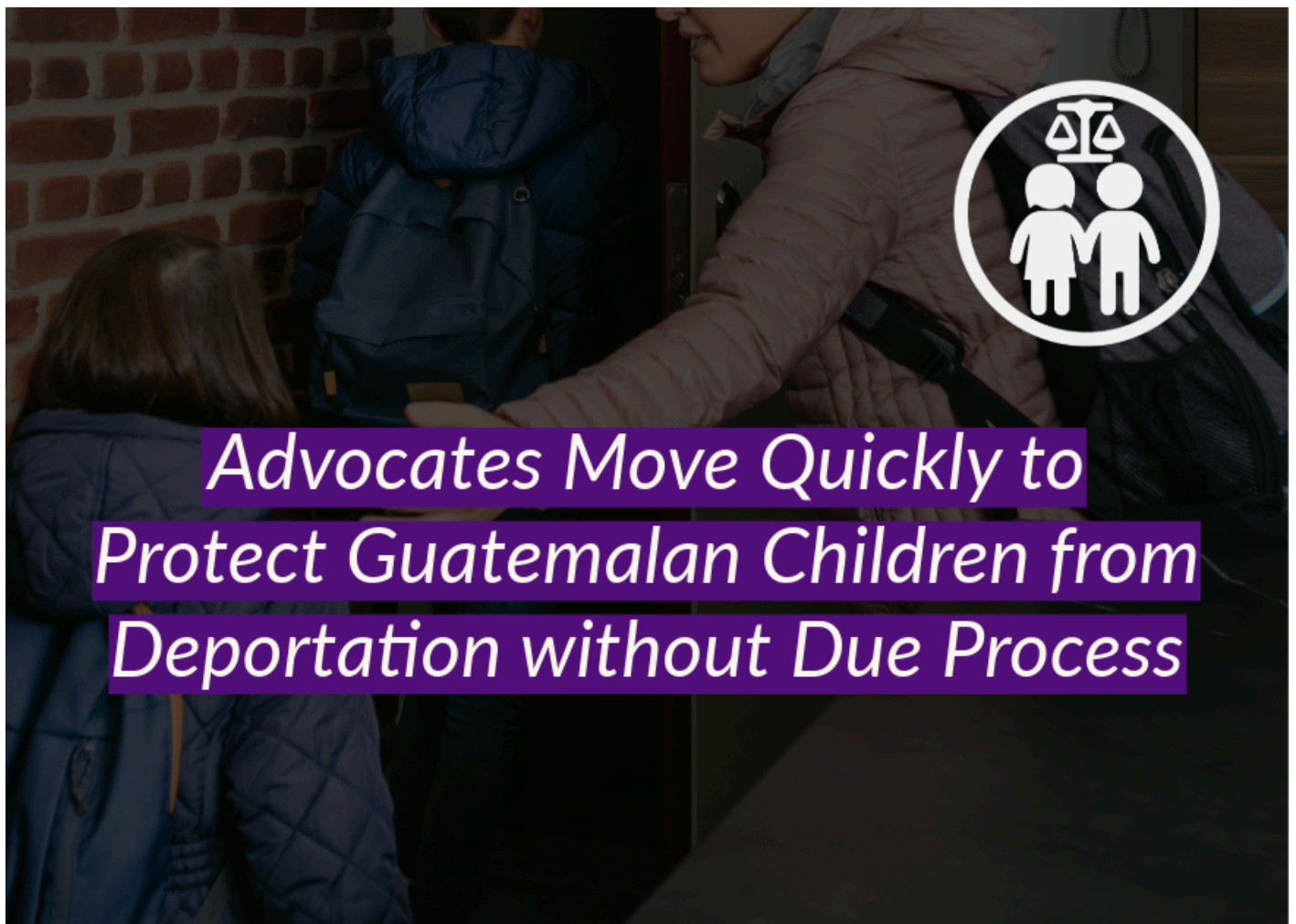


AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

CILA Children's Immigration Law Academy



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Advocates Move Quickly to Protect Guatemalan Children from Deportation without Due Process

[/ General, Removal, Working with Children](#)

The information in this blog post is current as of September 22, 2025.

During Labor Day weekend, unaccompanied immigrant children were woken up in the middle of the night in an attempt by the U.S. government to remove youth and expel them to Guatemala. Advocates and attorneys rushed to assist their clients and youth to protect their TVPRA and due process rights and file legal claims to stop the speedy removals. After an emergency court hearing in [L.G.M.L. v. Noem](#), a federal district court judge issued a temporary restraining order in the wee hours of Sunday, August 31 blocking the removals for fourteen days, and the temporary restraining order was extended through September 18 while the judge considered the issues.

The U.S. government stated the flights were intended to “reunify” children with their families, but a [Guatemalan government report and court filings](#) show that was not the case. Many parents of the children could not be located, and others did not want the children to return. Many of the [unaccompanied children](#) have legal counsel and were pursuing humanitarian legal relief to seek protection and safety in the United States after experiencing familial violence, abuse, and other dangerous circumstances in their home countries. A [whistle-blower’s account](#) also supports that the government knew the safety risks some of the children faced. Detailed accounts from the immigrant youth and advocates share their experiences, and some are cited in this ABC News article [“‘I feel totally traumatized’: Unaccompanied minors from Guatemala describe attempted deportation.”](#)

On September 18, the United States District Court for the District of Columbia [granted](#) plaintiffs’ motion to provisionally certify a class of “all unaccompanied [noncitizen] children from Guatemala who are or will be in the custody of Defendants and who (1) are not subject to an executable final order of removal and (2) have not been permitted to voluntarily depart.” The court also granted a preliminary injunction blocking the U.S. government from “transferring, repatriating, removing, or otherwise facilitating the transport of any Plaintiff—including both named Plaintiffs and all members of the provisionally certified class—from the United States” while the case moves forward. The litigation has now protected children from Guatemala, many of whom are Indigenous, in ORR custody. Yet, advocates have additionally raised concerns that their unaccompanied child clients from Honduras and El Salvador may be similarly targeted for attempted “reunifications” by the U.S. government. While the court did not include unaccompanied children from other countries in the provisional class, the court’s [memorandum opinion](#) stated, “Defendants should not construe this decision as an invitation to take similar action

with respect to these other unaccompanied [noncitizen] children. For the same reasons explained below, any such attempt to expel them is likely to be unlawful.” The National Immigration Law Center (NILC) includes litigation updates on *L.G.M.L. v. Noem* [here](#), and they shared this [press release](#) after the 9/18 preliminary injunction.

Join the ABA for a Free Webinar to Learn More

The [American Bar Association \(ABA\)](#), [The Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights](#), and others have made statements about these recent events to raise awareness about what immigrant children are facing. The ABA Commission on Immigration (COI) and ABA Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice are hosting a **free webinar**, “[The Night They Came for the Children: First Hand Accounts of the Failed Government Attempt to Deport Children](#),” on Wednesday, **September 24** from 3:00-4:30pm ET. CILA’s Director, Dalia Castillo-Granados, along with attorneys from the ABA Commission on Immigration, ProBAR, and NILC will participate in a panel to provide more information. View details and register for the webinar [here](#).

Read CILA’s [fact sheet](#) to learn about the systems unaccompanied immigrant children navigate and COI & CILA’s [explainer](#) on the importance of representation for immigrant children.

Learn more about [CILA’s work](#) and how to [get involved](#).



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APRIL, 2026



NO EVENTS

Every child deserves representation. Get involved.

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About us

CILA builds capacity for those working to advance the rights of children seeking protection through trainings, technical assistance, resource development, and collaboration.

CILA serves legal service providers, pro bono attorneys, and social services staff who are working with children in immigration-related proceedings nationwide. CILA began operations in late 2015.

Our mission

Through our work, we hope to ensure more immigrant youth are represented and to provide the resources and expertise needed to support those who endeavor to assist them.

Contact us

We're here to help.
Use our Contact Form.

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Email: cila@abacila.org



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Disclaimer: If you are an advocate, please know that information included here is not intended to be a substitute for independent legal research. For youth, please know that most information on CILA's website is intended for attorneys, legal staff, and social services staff. For information for youth, visit CILA's youth [page](#). Immigration law is complex and changes frequently. The information provided here is not a substitute for legal advice from an immigration lawyer familiar with your case.

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