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“Fed-Up Mama”-Turned -U.S. Senatorial Candidate Fundraises Response to Pending Flu Crisis at Border

Last week, a seven-month-old video surfaced depicting the painful death of Carlos Gregorio Hernández Vásquez, a sixteen-year-old Guatemalan boy lovingly nicknamed “Goyito”. The child had arrived on May 19, 2019, at the Texas border and was diagnosed with the flu by a nurse practitioner at a facility in McAllen, who noted his 103-degree fever.

In response, Border Patrol placed Goyito in a cell colloquially referred to as a *hielera* (icebox), due to the exceptionally cold temperatures at which such secured rooms are maintained, with nothing more than an aluminum “blanket” to protect him. No one would notice his passing, or make the effort to remove his body, for nearly four hours, despite another child being held in the same *hielera*. Carlos is at least the thirty-fourth immigrant to die in custody since President Trump’s inauguration.

Despite this, the CBP is continuing to deny those in detention access to vaccines in what the CDC is already predicting to be a difficult and unpredictable flu season. Outraged by Goyito’s preventable death and the 33 known deaths preceding it, Annie Garcia, a candidate in the Texas Democratic primary for U.S. Senate, began to look for ways she could leverage her candidacy to make a difference.

“We are the last line of defense in a system of checks and balances that has failed. Make no mistake; if ‘We the People’ do not condemn these gross acts of inhumanity, they will continue. More children will die. We- I- must do something.”

A perennial entrepreneur herself, Garcia had utilized online fundraising platforms to seed other projects, including for her non-profit organization OpHeart and a 3-in1 kitchen implement, the Gourmand’s Grater. And after learning of the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Global Response Management and their mission to bring emergency pre-hospital care and training to those living in or displaced from conflict zones, an idea was born.

Garcia launched a [GoFundMe campaign](#) to raise money for Global Response Management’s project in Matamoros. GRM is responding to the pending flu crisis by providing volunteer doctors flu vaccines to give to the 2,000 asylum seekers in camps in Matamoros, about 550 of whom are children. The flu claims over 600,000 lives worldwide a year, and nearly 60,000 in the United States alone.

“The inequities in the immigration system are personal to me. My husband is a naturalized U.S. citizen, and as a finance attorney, I worked pro bono for asylum seekers. In fact, when my first client arrived to the U.S. at IAH airport and presented herself for asylum, she was immediately taken to a detention facility run by CCA (now CoreCivic). When I saw that video of Carlos and how the AC was turned so high that his aluminum was flapping, I remembered how she used to tell me all the ways they punish people who have valid claims to asylum. After 8 months, we

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finally got in front of a judge and won our claim. We are the United States of America. I refuse to believe that this is now who we are.”

She also used the recent [Indivisible Texas U.S. Senate Candidate Issue Forum](#) to highlight the issue where she was joined by her fellow candidate, Sema Hernandez, in denouncing the separation, detention, and deaths of asylum-seekers in the name of US security.

This is the first time Garcia has run for office. Described by the [Texas Tribune](#) as, a “new candidate . . . promising to bring the perspective of one fed-up mama”, she is intent on bringing long-overdue action to the stale promises offered by “politicians-as-usual”.

For more about Global Response Management, go here: <https://www.global-response.org/>

For more on Annie Garcia, go here: <https://runannierun.com/>, [@RunAnnieRun2, YouTube](#), or contact Sarah Morgan at sarah@runannierun.com.