

## Bridge work will close Northwest Freeway this weekend

By Rebecca Hennes

U.S. 290 road closures will begin Friday night and go through early Monday as crews place the first beams for a new bridge at Texas 6 and FM 1960. Police will be on site to assist with traffic control, but motorists should expect delays and are encouraged to use alternate routes, the Texas Department of Transportation said. The following sections will be closed from 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12, until 5 a.m. Monday, Oct. 15:

- U.S. 290 eastbound mainlanes at Huffmeister. Detour to the eastbound frontage road and re-enter the mainlanes after Texas 6/F.M. 1960.
- U.S. 290 westbound mainlanes at West Road. Detour to the westbound frontage road and re-enter the mainlanes after F.M. 1960.
- U.S. 290 eastbound Telge entrance ramp

and the U.S. 290 eastbound exit ramp to Texas 6/F.M. 1960. Detour to the entrance ramp from Texas 6/F.M. 1960 and the exit ramp to Eldridge Parkway.

- Texas 6 northbound under US 290. Detour right on the U.S. 290 eastbound frontage road, U-turn at Eldridge to U.S. 290 westbound frontage road to Texas 6/F.M. 1960.
- F.M. 1960 southbound at Wortham Boulevard. Detour right on Wortham Boulevard, left on Wortham Center Drive, right on U.S. 290 westbound frontage road, U-turn at Huffmeister to U.S. 290 eastbound frontage road to Texas 6/F.M. 1960.
- Alternate lane of the U.S. 290 westbound frontage road from Texas 6/F.M. 1960 exit ramp to Wortham Center Drive. The Northwest Freeway eastbound frontage road at Texas 6/F.M. 1960 will be closed from midnight Saturday through 5 a.m. Monday, Oct. 15. Motorists will be detoured right on Texas 6, U-turn at Hempstead to Texas 6 northbound frontage road, then right on U.S. 290 eastbound frontage road.



Traffic jams in the north- and southbound lanes south of U.S. 290 around Cypress will be common this weekend, as crews begin placing the first beams of the new bridge at Texas 6 and FM 1960. The project will be similar to the Barker Cypress overpass shown above.

## Food fight: Houston restaurants welcome Cruz and O'Rourke

As midterm elections on November 6 near, the high-profile Senate race between incumbent Ted Cruz and challenger Beto O'Rourke keeps heating up

And now the competition has reached foodie level with a Whataburger mural popping up in East Downtown in tribute to O'Rourke and to his love of the fast food chain. On the city's West Side, the marquee at a restaurant displays a message welcoming Cruz to dine at the Italian eatery.

Thursday, O'Rourke took to Instagram to share of photo of an exterior wall of an East Downtown building adorned with a replica of a small plastic orange and white Whataburger order tent, including the word "Whatabeto" on top and the No. 18, for the election year 2018, as the order number.

The mural was painted by Gage Kelsey, the local artist who is behind several works in town, including The Lone Wolf mural on the corner of a building located at Hutchins and Polk.

O'Rourke showed his love for Whataburger in August when he skateboarded in the parking lot of an Austin locale as a group of his supporters chanted his name, and then feasted on a triple meat burger.

Meanwhile, the eye-catching marquee in front of Italian restaurant George's Pastaria proudly reads, "Ted Cruz you can eat here."



The high-profile Senate race between incumbent Ted Cruz and challenger Beto O'Rourke keeps heating up. (Tom Fox/The Dallas Morning News via AP, Pool, File)



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Editor's Choice



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York, U.S., October 12, 2018. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A man looks at electronic boards showing Japan's Nikkei average and Dow Jones Industrial Average outside a brokerage in Tokyo



Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, arrives for the royal wedding of Princess Eugenie and Jack Brooksbank at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, Windsor



MEP member Sonneborn in a mock-up Wehrmacht uniform is blocked by security and police to enter a book presentation of Hoecke of Germany's AFD party at the Frankfurt Book Fair



An American flag flies amongst rubble left in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael in Mexico Beach



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks about Hurricane Michael during signing ceremony for the "Save Our Seas Act of 2018" at the White House in Washington



2018 American Music Awards – Arrivals – Los Angeles, California, U.S., 09/10/2018 – Taylor Swift poses. REUTERS/Mike Blake TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Zilu Wang CHN performs in the Rhythmic Gymnastics Individual All-Around Qualification Subdivision 1 - Rotation 2 in the America Pavilion, Youth Olympic Park. The Youth Olympic Games, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Tuesday 9th October 2018. Jed Leicester for OIS/IOC/Handout via REUTERS ATTENTION EDITORS -



Julia Payne, a 2-year-old girl from Batavia, is being treated at Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago for acute flaccid myelitis, a rare condition that causes inflammation in the spinal cord area. (WGN-TV) It seemed like a 2-year-old girl from the Chicago area (Batavia) had the same cold as her sisters until her health took a drastic turn, leaving her unable to breathe on her own and paralyzing her, her family wrote on social media.

For the past three weeks, toddler Julia Payne has been treated at Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago where she was recently diagnosed with acute flaccid myelitis, a rare but serious condition that causes inflammation in the spinal cord area that directly affects a person's muscles. To date, officials say they believe mostly children have been affected; and while the causes vary, there's no known cure.

The Tribune couldn't reach the family, but her parents have taken to Facebook to chronicle the medical ordeal and have spoken out "to spread awareness of this crazy, rare, scary disease." Katie Payne, the girl's mother, told WGN-TV.

"We want research. We want what happened to Julia not to happen to anyone else," she told the television station.

Across the state, there have been nine recent cases of people younger than 18 years old who have been clinically diagnosed with acute flaccid myelitis. Last month, the Illinois Department of Public Health sent an alert to health care providers about AFM.

Since 2015, there had been four cases in Illinois, according to the health department. The Minnesota Department of Health put out an alert last week, stating that six cases have been reported in children across that state over the past several weeks.

Since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began tracking AFM in 2014, 362 cases have been reported across the country, there have been at least 38 cases so far this year in 16 states, according to the agency's website. Last year, one person diagnosed with AFM died, but the CDC does not know what role the illness played in the death.

Dr. Marcelo Malakooti, the medical director for the pediatric intensive care unit at Lurie

## Doctors Say Illness Is Similar To Polio- Nine Recent Cases Reported In Illinois

# Girl From Chicago Area Treated For Rare Disease

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Children's Hospital, said doctors immediately put Julia on a ventilator to help her breathe; the toddler would later undergo an MRI and was put on antibiotics. It wasn't until doctors forwarded lab test results to the CDC that their suspicions were confirmed: The girl had AFM.

Doctors at Lurie had suspected the girl had AFM based on the timeline of when she started to experience muscle weakness, Malakooti said. Her symptoms were noticeable after the girl had a prolonged cold, he said. Other signs of AFM include facial droop, difficulty moving the eyes, difficult swallowing and slurred speech, according to Illinois public health officials.



Doctors say Julia contracted what's known as an enterovirus, and that caused AFM. Four years ago, a nationwide increase in AFM cases coincided with a national outbreak of severe respiratory illness caused by enterovirus D68 or EV-D68, according to the CDC. While anyone can fall ill and recover from enterovirus, Malakooti and other medical experts say children's bodies react differently to it. "It's very hard to understand which kids are going to react this way and which aren't," Lurie's Malakooti said.

Marc Patterson, a neurologist at the Mayo Clinic, said the CDC has taken the lead in examining and researching the spike in cases since 2014. There isn't a specific treatment, Patterson said, but hospitals offer supportive care including physical therapy. In the most severe cases, surgery could be required to get the limbs to function again, Patterson said. The condition has been compared to polio because the condition can lead to paralysis. Mark Schleiss, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School, said polio stems from a different branch of enteroviruses than AFM.

Other causes of AFM have been linked to environmental toxins, genetic disorders and viruses similar to the West Nile virus, according to Illinois public health officials.

Patterson and Schleiss said one of the most important preventive steps is regular hand-washing.



Malakooti said AFM is so rare that parents shouldn't become alarmed. But parents should pay close attention and watch for signs after a child has a cold. Parents should seek immediate medical attention if a child starts to show signs of developing the symptoms such as weakness. Julia hasn't had to undergo any surgeries, but doctors did do a type of dialysis to clear out her blood, Malakooti said. She is expected to be transferred as soon as this week to a rehabilitation center to continue physical therapy. While her health is improving, she still needs a ventilator to breathe, and she will have to deal with prolonged weakness, Malakooti said.

Still, the girl appears to be in good spirits. A video posted by her family on Facebook recently showed her small hand waving at the camera.

"She's a happy, smiley little 2-year-old," Malakooti said. (Courtesy <http://www.chicagotribune.com>)

### Related

#### Six Minnesota children diagnosed with rare, polio-like disorder

State health officials have issued an alert to doctors after six Minnesota children were diagnosed with a rare, polio-like disorder that causes reduced mobility or paralysis in the arms and legs.

All six cases of acute flaccid myelitis, or AFM, have been reported since Sep. 20, prompting the Minnesota Department of Health to ask doctors to be on the lookout for the disorder, which has severe consequences but mysterious origins.



sults. Ehresmann said it's the "constellation of symptoms" that ties them together.

Elaine Young's 4-year-old son, Orville, was perhaps the first child to suffer AFM in the Minnesota cluster. He felt typical cold symptoms in July, which quickly gave way to immobility in his legs and paralysis in his upper right arm. Limited muscular activity in his diaphragm also restricted his breathing, at first, which can be a fatal complication of AFM.



Young said doctors delivered a diagnosis fairly rapidly after initially ruling out a stroke when she took Orville to the University of Minnesota Masonic Children's Hospital, where a neurologist had written a paper on AFM. But, confronting one of the first Minnesota cases, she had to find out what to do next on her own, she said, and found her way to Gillette Children's Specialty Services in St. Paul.

Physical rehabilitation combined with electrical muscular stimulation there over the past two months helped Orville regain 90 percent of his leg function. The top half of his right arm remains immobile, though.

"It definitely affected me and his father much more, emotionally, at least, because we can see into his future," Young said. "When you're 4 ... every time you wake up it's a big new change. So losing the use of your arm? He said: 'I can't give really good hugs anymore, but I'm doing all of my exercises!'"



The CDC has been collaborating with researchers nationally to understand AFM, to estimate how many cases occurred before 2014, and to determine why cases increased substantially starting that year.

The Health Department did not disclose the identities of people in the current cluster. The parents contacted the Star Tribune directly, hoping that news coverage would prompt parents to take precautions and doctors and hospitals to identify the condition quickly when they encounter it. (Courtesy <http://www.chicagotribune.com>)

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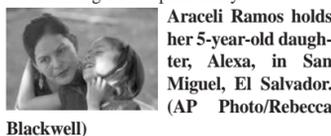
As the deportees were led off the plane onto the steamy San Salvador tarmac, an anguished Araceli Ramos Bonilla burst into tears, her face contorted with pain: "They want to steal my daughter!"

It had been 10 weeks since Ramos had last held her 2-year-old, Alexa. Ten weeks since she was arrested crossing the border into Texas and U.S. immigration authorities seized her daughter and told her she would never see the girl again.

What followed — one foster family's initially successful attempt to win full custody of Alexa — reveals what could happen to some of the infants, children and teens taken from their families at the border under a Trump administration policy earlier this year. The "zero-tolerance" crackdown ended in June, but hundreds of children remain in detention, shelters or foster care and U.S. officials say more than 200 are not eligible for reunification or release.

Federal officials insist they are reuniting families and will continue to do so. But an Associated Press investigation drawing on hundreds of court documents, immigration records and interviews in the U.S. and Central America identified holes in the system that allow state court judges to grant custody of migrant children to American families — without notifying their parents.

And today, with hundreds of those mothers and fathers deported thousands of miles away, the risk has grown exponentially.



Araceli Ramos holds her 5-year-old daughter, Alexa, in San Miguel, El Salvador. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)

States usually seal child custody cases, and the federal agencies overseeing the migrant children don't track how often state court judges allow these kids to be given up for adoption. But by providing a child's name and birthdate to the specific district, probate or circuit court involved, the AP found that it's sometimes possible to track these children.

Alexa's case began in November 2015 under the Obama administration, years before Trump's family-separation policy rolled out. Her 15-month separation from her mother exposes the fragile legal standing of children un-

# Deported Parents May Lose Kids To Adoption: Report

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

der the care of the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and a flawed, piecemeal system that can change the course of a child's life. It took 28 minutes for a judge in a rural courthouse near Lake Michigan to grant Alexa's foster parents, Sherri and Kory Barr, temporary guardianship. Alexa's mother and the little girl's immigration attorney were not even notified about the proceedings.

Based on their experiences with Alexa, the Barrs had become convinced that Alexa's mom was a bad mother and that the little girl would be abused if she were reunited with her. "My wife and I are sick over this," Kory Barr told the judge, who wished him good luck as he granted the foster parents' request two days after Christmas.

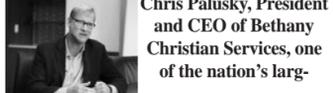


Five-year-old Alexa laughs with her mother, Araceli Ramos, while riding a merry-go-round at a park in San Miguel, El Salvador. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)

The federal system that had custody of Alexa says the state courts never should have allowed foster parents to get that far, no matter how good their intentions. But each state court system, from New York to California, runs wardship and adoption proceedings differently — and sometimes there are even variations between counties.

In Missouri, an American couple managed to permanently adopt a baby whose Guatemalan mother had been picked up in an immigration raid. That seven-year legal battle terminating the mother's parental rights ended in 2014. In Nebraska, another Guatemalan mother prevailed and got her kids back, but it took five years and over \$1 million in donated legal work.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement and Bethany Christian Services, the agency that placed Alexa in foster care, would not comment on her case. But Bethany said foster parents are informed they're not allowed to adopt migrant children.



Chris Palusky, President and CEO of Bethany Christian Services, one of the nation's largest adoption agencies. (AP Photo/Paul Sancya)

Since the 1980s, however, Bethany acknowledged that nine of the 500 migrant children assigned to its foster program have been adopted by American families. The children, ages 3 to 18, were adopted after it was determined it wouldn't be safe or possible for them to go back to their families; at least one asked to be adopted by his foster parents, and another was a trafficking victim, Bethany said. "We never want families to be separated," Bethany CEO Chris Palusky said. "That's what we're about, is bringing families together."

John Sandweg, who headed U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement under the Obama administration, said he worries that many more migrant children recently taken from their families may never see them again. "We have the kids in the U.S. and the parents down in Central America, and now they'll bring all these child welfare agencies into play," Sandweg said. "It's just a recipe for disaster."

In Ramos' darkest days, she would lay on her bed, stare at the ceiling and sob, her hand on her stomach.

"This girl, she was here, in my womb," she said. "We are meant to be together. Always." Alexa's mother was born in the middle of a bloody civil war in El Salvador that gave way to violent street crime. She was pregnant at 13; that daughter was raised by grandparents.



Araceli Ramos sheds a tear as she describes her battle to be reunited with her 5-year-old daughter. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)

Starting at age 19, Ramos had four sons with another man over the course of a decade, followed by the arrival of Alexa in 2013. She and her daughter looked alike — both bright-eyed, with dark hair framing their smooth skin. It was after the children's father found another woman that the abuse began, Ramos said.

"The worst time was when he kicked me so hard it left a bruise and it never went away," she later told an asylum officer. Without

makeup, a dent in the center of her forehead is apparent.

Ramos went to a shelter, but said she became increasingly convinced that her former partner would track her down and kill her. She applied for a U.S. visa, she said, but got nowhere.

During a custody battle in their home city of San Miguel, Ramos said her children's father filed false police reports, including one alleging that she encouraged a 17-year-old girl to have sex with an adult. With the help of his own mother, who told authorities her son had made up the accusations, she successfully cleared her name and the cases were dropped. Yet it was that information — later deemed "outdated and unsubstantiated" by the U.S. Justice Department — that was used in a Michigan court as support for the argument that Alexa should be permanently separated from her mother.



People eat inside a popular pupuseria, a restaurant serving traditional Salvadoran tortillas stuffed with savory fillings, in San Miguel, El Salvador. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)

Ramos scraped together \$6,000 to pay a smuggler who could help her escape from the man she said warned her she'd "never be at peace." On the monthlong, 1,500-mile pilgrimage, she carried Alexa, a change of clothes, diapers, cookies, juice and water.

The toddler was exhausted by the journey. She slumped for days in a backpack carrier when they walked, and dozed and fidgeted when they traveled by car. When she was sleepy and agitated, she insisted on being cradled in her mother's arms.

After crossing the Rio Grande near Roma, Texas, Ramos and her 2-year-old were arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Their ordeal appeared nearly over, since do-

mestic violence was then considered grounds for asylum.

In El Salvador, Ramos might earn \$5 a day selling clothes or waitressing. In the U.S., she could earn more than that in an hour. Ramos yearned for a new beginning.

It took less than an hour for her hopes to shatter. The border agent screening her records spotted a red flag: She was a criminal, he said, charged in El Salvador. Alexa, crying, was pulled from her mother's arms.

"They told me I would never see her again," Ramos recalled.

Ramos said she begged agents to send Alexa to friends in Texas, but said they gave up when two calls went unanswered.

The departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services have not disputed that events could unfold that way in the federal system. DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said Tuesday that the agency had not yet been able to investigate Ramos' claims, but "takes seriously our responsibility for those in our custody."

Three days after Ramos' separation from her daughter, court records show, the U.S. government labeled Alexa an "unaccompanied minor," which meant she entered the bureaucracy for migrant youth, typically teens, who arrive in the U.S. alone. The toddler was issued a notice to appear on "a date to be set, at a time to be set, to show why you should not be removed from the United States."



Alexa, 5, wears shoes depicting characters from Disney's "Frozen" movie. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)

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(Courtesy https://www.apnews.com/)

Advertisement for the 2018 Houston Travel Shopping Guide. It features a collage of images from the guide, including articles on Moody Gardens, Discovery Green Park, and Houston Premium Outlets. Large text reads '請至本報社 免費取閱' (Please come to our newspaper for free pickup) and '已經' (Already). The guide cover is titled '2018 休斯頓 旅遊購物指南 HOUSTON TRAVEL SHOPPING GUIDE VOLUME 5'.

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