



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 31, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Todd M. Lyons
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons,

I write to express serious concern that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has curtailed critical oversight and communication functions during the current lapse in appropriations. On behalf of my constituents, who continue to be detained, harassed, and assaulted by ICE, I demand the immediate resumption of these critical functions.

Under the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was provided \$170 billion, which the agency is permitted to use during a lapse in appropriations. Despite this influx of funding, during the government shutdown, the agency has furloughed the staff of the Offices of Detention Oversight and Congressional Affairs.¹ As a result, ICE is operating without any meaningful internal or Congressional oversight. Members of Congress have been denied access to detention facilities and told they cannot be provided any information about these facilities or the people held therein.

The American people expect transparency and, in this moment, the need for oversight could not be more urgent. This year, at least 20 people have died in ICE custody, the highest number since 2005.² In addition, ICE continues to detain pregnant women who have reported disturbing treatment, including shackling, solitary confinement, delayed or substandard prenatal care, denial of prenatal vitamins, inadequate food and water, medical care provided without informed consent, lack of interpretation and translation services, and medical neglect leading to serious infection after miscarriage.³ Furthermore, ICE agents are operating lawlessly, using violence to detain citizens, denying due process, and hiding their identities to avoid accountability.

¹ Douglas MacMillan, (October 7, 2025). *ICE closes detention oversight group in shutdown despite surge in detainees*. Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/10/07/ice-detention-centers-oversight-shutdown/>

² Ximena Bustillo & Rahul Mukherjee (October 23, 2025). *It's the deadliest year for people in ICE custody in decades; next year could be worse*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2025/10/23/nx-s1-5538090/ice-detention-custody-immigration-arrest-enforcement-dhs-trump>

³ ACLU, (October 22, 2025). *ACLU, Partners Demand ICE Release Pregnant and Postpartum People from ICE Detention*. <https://www.aclu.org/documents/aclu-partners-demand-ice-release-pregnant-and-postpartum-people-from-ice-detention>



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

I recognize that certain nonessential functions must pause during a lapse in appropriations. However, a lack of funding cannot be used as justification to strip away any measure of accountability. To safeguard the health, safety, and dignity of my constituents, I urge you to reinstate necessary staff for the Office of Detention Oversight, immediately restore communication channels between ICE and congressional offices, and ensure Members of Congress have access to all ICE facilities.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maxine Dexter", written in a cursive style.

Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress