

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 12, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem,

We write to request a meeting to discuss how the Department of Homeland Security will prioritize spending the \$150 billion in new resources it has been allocated under H.R. 1.

As members who represent border states, we share the Department's stated goal of promoting border security, and we recommend the below as a manner to do so without eroding our American values. The \$150 billion in taxpayer dollars newly allocated to the Department must be spent effectively, efficiently, and properly to ensure that we can meet our shared goals of securing our border; prioritizing enforcement against those convicted of serious crimes and who pose a threat to public safety; avoiding waste and abuse; providing oversight and transparency to the American people; and upholding our Constitution.

We believe that the spending recommendations below outline how this \$150 billion in funding can and should be allocated to best address our shared priorities, reflect the needs of border communities, and we look forward to the opportunity to discuss implementation.

Border Infrastructure and Wall Systems

- Funding to support maintenance and upgrading of existing physical barriers and closing gaps where needed and effective, like areas near ports of entry (POEs), in urban areas, and areas with high crossing rates. This funding should take into account the costs related to upkeep of existing roads and infrastructure at the border.
- Prioritizing the use of technology that acts as a barrier and force multiplier for USBP agents in areas where physical barriers are not the most effective solution, including extremely rural areas or areas with rugged, extreme, or impassable terrain.
- Increased funding for technology to secure the border. DHS should prioritize operations aimed at stopping the trafficking of dangerous drugs like fentanyl, reducing illegal entries, and disrupting smuggling operations on the border both at and between POEs on the northern and southern land borders, specifically increased utilization of:
 - Autonomous surveillance;
 - Tethered aerostats;
 - Cross border tunnel detection technology;
 - Ground based technologies;
 - Mobile surveillance;
 - Drones;
 - Geospatial capabilities;

- Mesh networks; and
 - Technology to improve search and rescue capabilities.
- Increased funding for utilization and development of technology to counter use of drones by cartels used for spotting and trafficking.
- Investments in the expansion and modification of CBP communications infrastructure along the entirety of the northern and southern land border to ensure that USBP agents have radio, cell phone, and other needed continued communication capabilities to aid during patrol or calls between POEs.
- Increased investments in real-time mapping and data collection of migrant deaths along the border to inform rescue efforts and trafficking prevention strategies.
- Sufficient allowances for work cost, installation, utilization, and maintenance of technology and training for officers to ensure operation and long-term use of technology.

Personnel and Fleet Management

- Addressing USBP recruitment and retention shortfalls by prioritizing returning agents to their primary mission: patrolling the areas within the immediate vicinity of the northern and southern land border to respond to the humanitarian and security needs posed by migrants. To achieve this goal, DHS should also prioritize the hiring of process coordinators and mission support staff, as well as increasing hiring of child welfare experts.
- Additional training and improvement of DHS personnel identification requirements — including restrictions on wearing facemasks and other facial coverings that conceal agent identity — to increase accountability and trust by the American people and expanded use of body-worn cameras, specifically during interior enforcement actions.
- Improving background check process, specifically for applicants with existing security clearances, and revision of polygraph standards to more carefully take into account belief in or ties to extremist ideologies.
- Funding for USBP vehicle repairs and fleet maintenance, including purchasing of new vehicles and proper garage and storage space.
- Expanded use of ATVs by USBP, including those with emergency medical service capabilities to provide aid to migrants with immediate health concerns after being trafficked to the border.
- Increased resources to support Air and Marine Operations, including staffing and maintenance needs related to border security operations and interdiction of illegal drugs and weapons.
- Additional training and services for USBP agents, including:
 - Training for enforcement near Tribal areas;
 - Additional EMS and lifesaving training; and
 - Mental health services for agents.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention

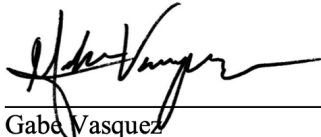
- Prioritizing enforcement against and detention of individuals with serious or violent criminal convictions or who pose a high threat to public safety. In addition, ICE should:

- Incorporate policies aimed at curbing the ineffective use of these taxpayer funds associated with detaining individuals with no criminal charges or convictions.
- Prioritize using existing capacity in hard-sided, permanent detention centers for detainees deemed a high security risk and consider alternatives to detention, including electronic monitoring, for individuals deemed a low security risk.
- Improving ICE transparency and detention oversight, including:
 - Implementing specific oversight and reporting processes to ensure that no U.S. citizens are detained or removed by ICE.
 - Expanding public reporting on capacity in ICE detention facilities, including public disclosure of population security levels in detention facilities and what percentage of each facility is being used to detain individuals deemed a low security risk and with no violent or serious criminal convictions.
 - Expanding public reporting related to in-custody deaths, sexual assaults, medical emergencies, and other critical incidents, as well as reports with key facts and findings.
 - Funding for ICE Online Detainee Locator System and timely updates on transfers to family members.
 - Funding to facilitate access to counsel and Legal Orientation Programs for all facilities.
 - Funding for oversight of detention centers and processes, including re-establishment of the USCIS Ombudsman, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, and the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman.
 - Strengthen legal protections for whistleblowers and staff who report misconduct, civil rights violations, or abuses within detention and enforcement systems.
- Improving detention resources and standards, specifically:
 - Funding to ensure that DHS detention facilities meet Performance-Based National Detention Standards 2011 (PBNDS 2011).
 - Sufficient funding for provision of basic services, including health care, nutritious meals, and sanitary and humane conditions.
 - Additional funding for mental health support and suicide prevention for detainees.
 - Funding to make more phones and tablets available to detainees at reasonable rates, and sufficient funding to ensure communication devices remain operational.
 - For indigent detainees, specifically any individual with less than \$10 in their commissary account after two weeks, reestablishment of programming to ensure they are provided a reasonable allotment of weekly free phone minutes to facilitate calls with family members, and provision of additional hygiene and commissary credits.
- Developing proper guardrails for family residential centers, including:
 - Funding should be utilized to avoid the detention of family units, particularly those with small children. Instead, ICE should prioritize using a short-term custody approach that ensures families are not detained for over 72 hours and only as long as absolutely necessary to process documentation, assess health concerns, and move to appropriate case-management services.
 - Funding onsite case management staff to assist with family communication.

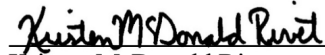
- Development of public standards on family detention and preventing family separation.
- Increased reporting and oversight relating to removal and detention, including tracking and documentation of the final country of removal and ensuring that individuals are not removed to third countries where they will face persecution or threat to life and where integration is not possible.

Given that some agencies within the Department will see their budgets nearly triple under this incoming \$150 billion allocation, it is imperative that the American taxpayer be granted transparency and oversight into your new spending plans. We look forward to your prompt response and look forward to meeting with you to discuss these priorities.

Sincerely,



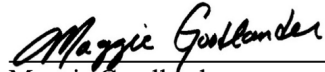
Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress