

January 28, 2026

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

Mr. Todd M. Lyons
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street SW, Mail Stop 5902
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons:

We write to express our grave concern and demand transparency regarding the alarming increase in deaths of individuals held in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody. As the Trump administration reaches the one-year mark, the number of deaths in ICE detention has reached historic levels. 2025 was reported to be “ICE’s deadliest year” in more than two decades, with 31 deaths in custody reported.¹ And less than one month into 2026, six additional deaths in ICE custody have already been reported.

Individuals in ICE custody are dependent on the care and safety that the federal government provides. All immigration detention facilities, regardless of whether they are operated by private companies or the federal government, are legally required to meet constitutional and statutory standards, including the provision of adequate medical care and safe living conditions.² ICE’s own detention standards further require the provision of necessary medical care, including initial medical, dental, and mental health screenings; routine and preventive care; specialty and emergency care; hospitalization when medically indicated; and timely responses to medical complaints.³ Yet reports describe widespread and systemic failures in the provision of medical and mental health care in ICE detention facilities, including ICE detention medical staff delaying treatment, failing to manage necessary medication, and failing to provide appropriate mental health care, leading to increased risk of deaths by suicide.⁴ In fact, three of the six deaths in ICE custody this month were reportedly suicides. ICE has also reportedly failed to pay any third-party providers for medical care for individuals in immigration detention since October of 2025.⁵ As a result, some providers are denying services for detained individuals, exacerbating the existing crisis of care plaguing immigration detention centers.⁶

These concerns are made worse by the lack of transparency and the conflicting accounts of deaths in custody. The death of Geraldo Lunas Campos on January 3 exemplifies this. When the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) initially announced his death, the agency did not

¹ Documents on File with Committee.

² *Explainer: U.S. Immigration Detention and Custody Standards*, NAT’L IMMIGR. FORUM (Jun. 18, 2025), <https://forumtogether.org/article/explainer-u-s-immigration-detention-and-custody-standards/>.

³ Abigail F. Kolker, *Medical Care Standards in Immigrant Detention Facilities*, CRS Report IF12623 (Cong. Research Serv. Apr. 2, 2024), <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/IF12623?>

⁴ <https://americanoversight.org/resource/deadly-failures-preventable-deaths-in-u-s-immigration-detention/>;

⁵ Judd Legum, *ICE has stopped paying for detainee medical treatment*, POPULAR INFORMATION (Jan. 20, 2026), <https://popular.info/p/ice-has-stopped-paying-for-detainee>.

⁶ *Id.*

disclose a cause of death.⁷ Subsequently, DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin stated that Mr. Lunas Campos died after attempting to take his own life.⁸ According to public reporting however, a fellow detained person stated that he witnessed Mr. Lunas Campos being choked by guards.⁹ Further, the El Paso County Medical Examiner's Office has ruled that Mr. Lunas Campos's death was a homicide.¹⁰ These conflicting accounts raise profound concerns about the circumstances of his death and DHS's handling of the case.

Further, the alleged suicide of Chaofeng Ge is equally concerning. According to DHS, Mr. Ge was found hanging in his cell four days after entering ICE custody on August 4, 2025.¹¹ However, according to an autopsy viewed by Mr. Ge's attorney and media outlets, Mr. Ge's hands and feet were found bound together, calling into serious question the cause of death provided by DHS.¹²

This rise in deaths in custody points to systemic failures in the immigration detention system that require immediate attention. The alarming increase in deaths is coming at a time when ICE is detaining over 70,000 people every day, the Trump administration has dismantled the agencies responsible for oversight, and DHS is unlawfully restricting Members of Congress from accessing detention facilities to conduct oversight.

Being placed in immigration detention should never amount to a death sentence. The families of those in detention centers, along with the rest of the American people, deserve transparency and accountability now. To better understand why deaths in ICE custody are increasing and why known risks are not being effectively mitigated, we request responses to the following questions as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 22, 2026:

- What measures have ICE and DHS taken to ensure they can provide adequate medical and mental health staff who are trained to administer appropriate medical care when needed?
- How many detention facilities lack full-time medical staffing? Provide a breakdown by facility, including vacant positions.
- Who has the authority to approve hospitalizations, medical transfers, or alternatives for those who are medically vulnerable?

⁷ Douglas MacMillan, *Medical examiner likely to classify death of ICE detainee as homicide, recorded call says*, WASH. POST (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2026/01/15/ice-detention-death-homicide/>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Pooja Salhotra, *Death of Cuban Detainee in El Paso ICE Facility Is Ruled a Homicide*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Jan. 21, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/21/us/el-paso-ice-detainee-homicide.html>.

¹¹ Dan Gooding, *Man Detained by ICE Found Dead, Hanging With Hands and Feet Tied—Attorney*, NEWSWEEK (Nov. 18, 2025), <https://www.newsweek.com/ice-detainee-death-family-questions-hands-feet-tied-11066992>

¹² *Id.*

- Does every detention facility detaining more than 25 people have a full-time, in-person staffer designated with this responsibility? If not, how many facilities lack this position and what is your plan to ensure adequate staffing?
- How are decisions to not escalate care taken, documented, and reviewed?
- How does ICE plan to ensure a legally obligated and standardized level of care across spaces of detention, including federal and private detention facilities, and hospitals caring for migrants in custody?
- Is ICE working to expand and revise its current standards and policies to reflect the influx of migrants and the influx of money given to the agency?
- What role does the DHS Office of Inspector General play in reviewing deaths in ICE custody, and how are findings used to prevent future fatalities?
- What steps are DHS and ICE taking to prevent further suicides in ICE custody?
- What efforts is ICE planning to take to properly notify the families of those in detention when their loved ones experience medical emergencies and transfers?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



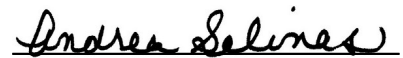
Pramila Jayapal
Ranking Member
Immigration Integrity,
Security, and Enforcement
House Judiciary Committee



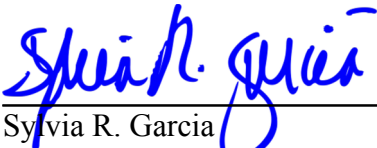
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress




Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



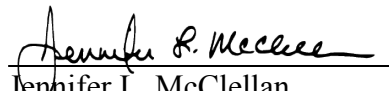
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



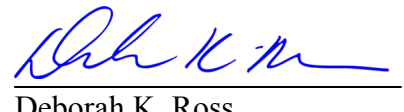
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



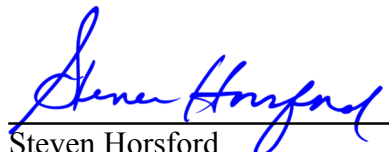
John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress




Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



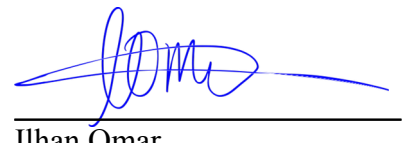
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress
Nevada's Fourth
Congressional District



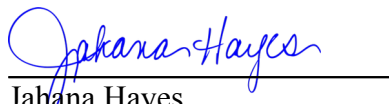
Greg Casar
Member of Congress




Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



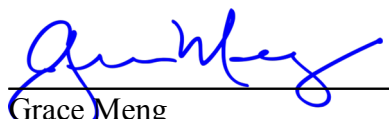
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



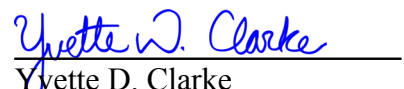
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress




Grace Meng
Member of Congress



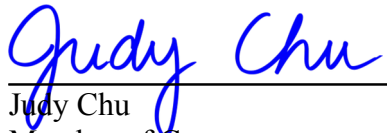
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Dave Min
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Emily Randall
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



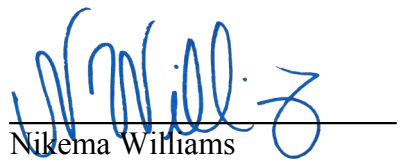
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



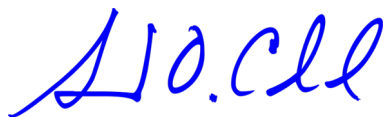
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



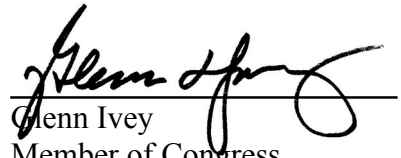
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



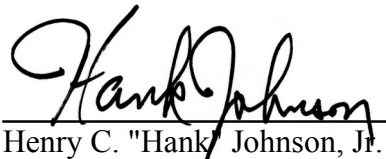
Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



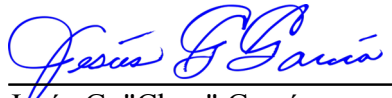
Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



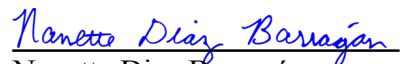
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



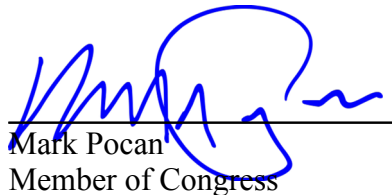
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



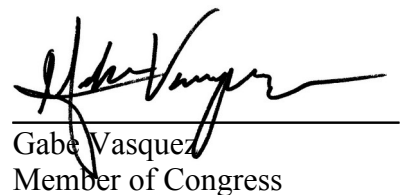
Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



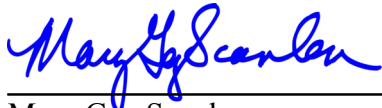
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



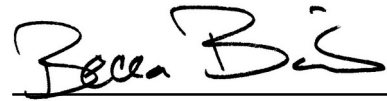
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



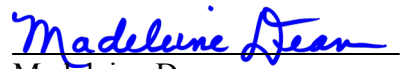
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



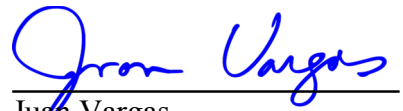
Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



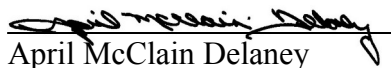
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



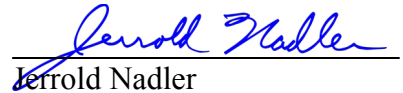
Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Terrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



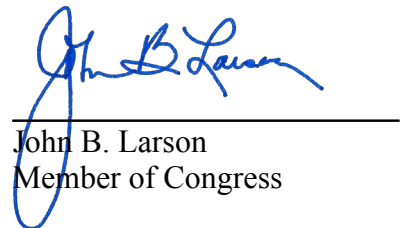
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



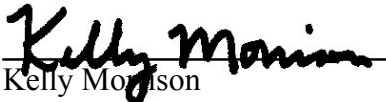
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

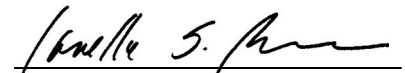


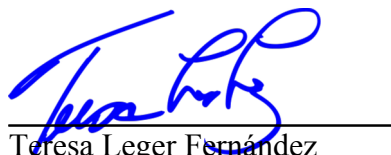
John B. Larson
Member of Congress

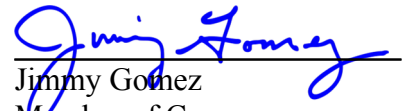

Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress

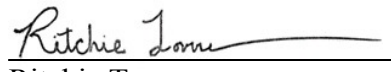

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

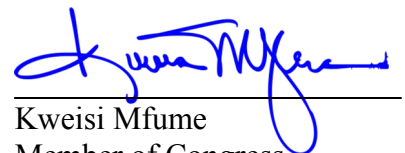

Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress


Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress


Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress


Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress


Gabe Amo
Member of Congress


Jason Crow
Member of Congress

cc:
Dr. Joseph V. Cuffari
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, DC 20528

Secretary Noem and Todd M. Lyons
Page