

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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March 24, 2026

The Honorable Joseph V. Cuffari  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane, SW  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Inspector General Cuffari:

We write to request you investigate the death of Ruben Ray Martinez, a 23-year-old U.S. citizen who was shot and killed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in South Padre Island, Texas.

In the early morning hours of March 15, 2025, Mr. Martinez approached a traffic stop which had a heavy presence of federal, state, and local law enforcement officers. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) later reported that ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents were there to help control the flow of traffic following a car accident. The released video footage shows that Mr. Martinez was given conflicting instructions by law enforcement officers from multiple agencies. His car appears to have been stopped or moving at a crawl when HSI Agent Jack C. Stevens fired three shots into Martinez's blue Ford sedan. Mr. Martinez was then pulled out of his car, thrown to the ground, and handcuffed while lying face down. Joshua Orta, Martinez's childhood friend and a passenger in the car, was ordered to exit the vehicle and was taken into custody.<sup>1</sup>

For nearly a year, DHS and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) withheld basic facts of the case, concealed ICE's involvement in the shooting, and lied about the circumstances surrounding the shooting. DPS failed to note ICE's involvement in the shooting of Mr. Martinez, describing it only as an "officer-involved" shooting.<sup>2</sup> DHS falsely claimed Mr. Martinez

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<sup>1</sup> *Bodycam Video Contradicts ICE Claims in Fatal Shooting of U.S. Citizen Ruben Ray Martinez in Texas*, CBS News (Mar. 7, 2026) (online at <https://cbsnews.com/news/bodycam-video-ice-fatal-shooting-ruben-ray-martinez-texas/>); *Video Footage Appears to Cast Doubt on DHS Claims About Fatal 2025 Shooting Involving Agent*, ABC News (Mar. 7, 2026) (online at <https://abcnews.com/US/video-footage-casts-doubt-dhs-claims-fatal-2025/story?id=130865168>).

<sup>2</sup> *23-Year-Old Man Killed in Officer-Involved Shooting on South Padre Island*, Fox RGV (Mar. 20, 2025) (online at <https://foxrgv.tv/23-year-old-man-killed-in-officer-involved-shooting-on-south-padre-island/>).

intentionally struck an agent with his vehicle and that another agent fired in self-defense.<sup>3</sup> The released video footage does not appear to show Mr. Martinez rapidly accelerating forward or intentionally ramming into a second HSI agent, Hector Sosa, as DHS had claimed.<sup>4</sup> DHS's account has been disputed by witness testimony and body-camera and surveillance footage, which was only released following a public outcry and demands for more information by Members of Congress.<sup>5</sup>

At least 23 people have been shot at by DHS personnel over the past 14 months and six of them have been killed, including U.S. citizens Alex Pretti and Renée Good.<sup>6</sup> Further, as in other recent cases, DHS appears to have lied about the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr. Martinez.<sup>7</sup> The pattern of lies to coverup DHS misconduct is well-documented.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore critical that your investigation encompass the Department's response to Mr. Martinez's killing as well as the killing itself. Mr. Martinez's family and the public deserve nothing less than a complete investigation of his killing and the aftermath, including an accounting of wrongdoing by federal officials.

Mr. Martinez's death is a tragedy that should never have happened. DHS's repeated lies and omissions about the shooting of Mr. Martinez reflect a troubling pattern in which official statements about the use of lethal force are later challenged by video footage, witness testimony, or subsequent investigations. It is imperative that DHS OIG conduct a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding Mr. Martinez's death. It is also critical that DHS OIG investigate the statements made and any subsequent actions taken by HSI and any other DHS officials to conceal the facts and circumstances around Mr. Martinez's death.

In addition, please provide written answers to the following questions by April 6, 2026:

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<sup>3</sup> *Video Footage Appears to Cast Doubt on DHS Claims About Fatal 2025 Shooting Involving Agent*, ABC News (Mar. 7, 2026) (online at <https://abcnews.com/US/video-footage-casts-doubt-dhs-claims-fatal-2025/story?id=130865168>).

<sup>4</sup> *Video of ICE Shooting of Texas Man Raises Questions About Government Claim*, Washington Post (Mar. 7, 2026) (online at <https://washingtonpost.com/immigration/2026/03/07/ruben-martinez-dhs-killing-texas-video/>).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*; Letter from Representative Joaquin Castro to Secretary Kristi Noem, Department of Homeland Security, and Director Freeman F. Martin, Texas Department of Public Safety (Feb. 26, 2026) (online at <https://castro.house.gov/imo/media/doc/02262026lettertodepartmentofhomelandsecurityandtexasdepartmentofpublicsafety.pdf>).

<sup>6</sup> *How Many People Have Been Shot in ICE Raids?*, The Trace (Feb. 23, 2026) (online at <https://thetrace.org/2025/12/immigration-ice-shootings-guns-tracker/>).

<sup>7</sup> *A Pattern of Denial at the Department of Homeland Security*, WBUR (Jan. 30, 2026) (online at <https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2026/01/30/pattern-denial-department-homeland-security>).

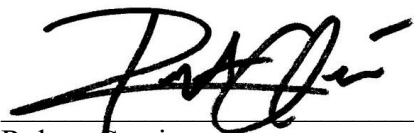
<sup>8</sup> *See, e.g., ICE Says 2 of Its Officers May Have Lied Under Oath About Shooting Migrant In Minnesota*, ABC News (Feb. 13, 2026) (online at <https://abcnews.com/US/prosecutor-moves-dismiss-charges-migrant-shot-minneapolis-citing/story?id=130131578>); *How a Collision with Border Patrol Led to a Chicago Woman's Arrest*, CBS News (Jan. 27, 2026) (online at <https://cbsnews.com/news/how-a-collision-with-border-patrol-led-to-a-chicago-womans-arrest-60-minutes/>); *New Video Contradicts Border Patrol Account of Chicago Shooting, Lawyer Says*, CBS News (Jan. 19, 2026) (online at <https://cbsnews.com/news/new-video-contradicts-border-patrol-account-of-chicago-shooting-lawyer-says-60-minutes/>).

1. Does DHS OIG currently have an open investigation into the shooting of Mr. Martinez? If so, is DHS OIG conducting a criminal or administrative investigation into the shooting and death of Mr. Martinez?
2. Has DHS OIG referred the shooting of Mr. Martinez to ICE Office of Professional Responsibility for investigation? If not, do you intend to do so?

We request a briefing no later than April 6, 2026, explaining how DHS OIG plans to move forward with this investigation. Further, upon completion of the investigation, we request immediate notification, a copy of the report of investigation, and written confirmation of any disciplinary or correction action taken.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Robert Garcia  
Ranking Member



Greg Casar  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman