

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2025

## VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20528-0525

Dear Secretary Noem:

We write regarding the disturbing and increasingly frequent reports of unconstitutional detentions of U.S. citizens by agents of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), often using disproportionate force. Reports of excessive, shocking behavior by CBP and ICE agents directed at U.S. citizens have been rampant under the current Administration.<sup>1</sup> As the Ranking Members of the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI) and the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (House Oversight), we are conducting a bicameral inquiry into the increasing detention of U.S. citizens by federal immigration agents. We write to request information and records regarding your Department's detention of U.S. citizens from the start of President Trump's term.

Since his inauguration, President Trump has embraced the use of federal immigration agents to terrorize communities nationwide whose politics he disfavors, a campaign that has increasingly ensnared U.S. citizens. It was reported last week that more than 170 U.S. citizens have been detained by federal immigration agents in the last nine months, a count that includes nearly 130 citizens arrested for allegedly assaulting or impeding officers (charges that often are dismissed or wilt under any scrutiny), and more than 50 citizens held after federal immigration

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., *A Pattern of Violence: Documenting ICE Agents' Brutal Use of Force in LA Immigration Raids*, THE INTERCEPT (July 7, 2025), <https://theintercept.com/2025/07/07/ice-raids-la-violence-video-bystanders/> (noting that an analysis of over a dozen immigration raids in Los Angeles area by The Intercept found that ICE agents consistently aimed firearms and sprayed chemical irritants at onlookers and protesters, launched tear gas and flash bang grenades into crowds, and beat the people they detained); *After military-style raid on South Shore apartments, Congress members rally around residents*, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES (Oct. 6, 2025), <https://chicago.suntimes.com/immigration/2025/10/05/congress-members-rally-south-shore-apartment-ice-raid> (describing a raid in which federal immigration agents landed a helicopter on an apartment building in the early morning hours and detained numerous U.S. citizens).

agents questioned their citizenship.<sup>2</sup> This number, however, is at best a gross undercount, as new stories of ICE and CBP agents detaining U.S. citizens on the flimsiest of rationales emerge daily.<sup>3</sup>

The impact of these arrests has not been evenly distributed across the country, and cities like Chicago, Portland, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles have been targeted heavily by ICE and CBP. Troublingly, the pattern of U.S. Citizen arrests coincides with an alarming increase in racial profiling—particularly of Latinos—which has been well documented in Los Angeles.<sup>4</sup> Justice Kavanaugh justified this policy on the false grounds that “[i]f the officers learn the individual they stopped is a U. S. citizen or otherwise lawfully in the United States, they promptly let the individual go.”<sup>5</sup> In a pattern symptomatic of a disregard for civil rights by DHS, U.S. citizens have faced extended periods of detention. George Retes, a U.S. citizen and Army veteran who grew up in Southern California and served in Iraq, was held by ICE for three days without being permitted to make a phone call or see an attorney.<sup>6</sup> Andrea Velez, another U.S. citizen detained in downtown Los Angeles, was held in ICE custody for two days and deprived of water for 24 hours.<sup>7</sup> Recent reporting has found that at least two dozen U.S. citizens have been held for more than a day without being able to phone lawyers or loved ones.<sup>8</sup>

It is also entirely unclear how a wrongly ensnared U.S. citizen is supposed to prove their citizenship to federal immigration officials, particularly if they have a Latino surname or appearance. Leo Venegas, a U.S. citizen and construction worker in Alabama, has incredibly been detained by ICE agents twice in workplace raids due to questions about his citizenship, despite having his REAL ID driver’s license—an identity card available only to U.S. citizens and legal residents—on his person both times.<sup>9</sup> Agents reportedly dismissed his identification as fake.<sup>10</sup> Maria Greeley, a U.S. citizen born in Illinois, was reportedly detained by ICE in Chicago for hours

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<sup>2</sup> *We Found That More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They’ve Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days*, PROPUBLICA (Oct. 16, 2025), [https://www.propublica.org/article/immigration-dhs-american-citizens-arrested-detained-against-will?utm\\_source=sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=majorinvestigations&utm\\_content=toc](https://www.propublica.org/article/immigration-dhs-american-citizens-arrested-detained-against-will?utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=majorinvestigations&utm_content=toc).

<sup>3</sup> Numerous new such stories have emerged in just the past week. See, e.g., *Teenage US Citizen Detained by Border Patrol in Chicago*, NEWSWEEK (Oct. 15, 2025), <https://www.newsweek.com/teenage-us-citizen-detained-by-border-patrol-chicago-10882645>; *US Citizen Says ICE Detained Her, Said Her Passport ‘Isn’t Real’*, NEWSWEEK (Oct. 14, 2025), <https://www.newsweek.com/us-citizen-says-ice-detained-her-said-her-passport-isnt-real-10875767>.

<sup>4</sup> *One in Five ICE Arrests Are Latinos on the Streets with No Criminal Past or Removal Order*, CATO AT LIBERTY BLOG (Aug. 5, 2025), <https://www.cato.org/blog/1/5-ice-arrests-are-latinos-streets-no-criminal-past-or-removal-orde>

<sup>5</sup> *Noem v. Vasquez Perdomo*, 606 U.S. \_\_\_, \_\_\_ (2025) (Kavanaugh, J., concurring in the grant of the application for stay).

<sup>6</sup> *A U.S. veteran spoke out against his wrongful arrest by ICE. Now he’s being accused of assault*, L.A. TIMES (Sept. 26, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-09-26/dhs-accuses-veteran-of-assault-after-he-details-his-arrest>.

<sup>7</sup> *U.S. citizen detained by ICE in L.A. says she wasn’t given water for 24 hours*, NBC NEWS (Aug. 12, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/us-citizen-detained-ice-l-says-wasnt-water-24-hours-rcna224493>.

<sup>8</sup> See ProPublica, *supra* note 2.

<sup>9</sup> *U.S. citizen wrongfully detained twice in Alabama workplace raids sues immigration authorities*, PBS (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/u-s-citizen-wrongfully-detained-twice-in-alabama-workplace-raids-sues-immigration-authorities>.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

due to questions about her citizenship.<sup>11</sup> Greeley had her passport on her person at the time of her detention, but the agents did not believe it was authentic because they determined that Greeley (who is Latina) did not “look like” someone with the last name Greeley.<sup>12</sup>

To assist our committees’ understanding of CBP and ICE’s increasing detention of U.S. citizens through the use of disproportionate force and fundamentally flawed rationales, please provide the following information to PSI and House Oversight by November 3, 2025:

1. The total number of U.S. citizens that have been detained by CBP, ICE, or any DHS component agency from January 20, 2025, to the present;
2. A list of all U.S. citizens detained by CBP, ICE, or any DHS component agency from January 20, 2025, to the present for more than 24 hours, including the length of their detention, where they were detained, by which DHS component, and a detailed description of the rationale for the arrest and extended detention;
3. A detailed description of training ICE and CBP agents receive concerning how to determine whether an individual is a U.S. citizen;
4. A detailed description regarding training ICE and CBP agents receive concerning the recognition of counterfeit identity documents such as REAL IDs and Passports; and
5. A detailed description regarding training ICE and CBP agents receive concerning the use of force.

In addition, please provide PSI and House Oversight with the following records<sup>13</sup> by November 3, 2025, and any subsequent records responsive to these requests on a bi-weekly basis thereafter:

1. All records related to the detention of U.S. citizens by ICE or CBP agents from January 20, 2025, to the present;
2. All complaints received by DHS related to the treatment of U.S. citizens by DHS personnel from January 20, 2025, to the present;
3. All policies or procedures regarding the steps ICE and CBP agents are required to take to identify whether individuals they have detained are U.S. citizens;

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<sup>11</sup> *ICE Detains Citizen After Saying She Doesn’t “Look Like” Her Last Name*, THE NEW REPUBLIC (Oct. 14, 2025), <https://newrepublic.com/post/201745/ice-detains-us-citizen-doesnt-look-american>.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> For purposes of this request, “records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), direct messages, chats, calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

4. All policies and procedures regarding the recognition of counterfeit identity documents by ICE and CBP agents, including but not limited to records regarding any training ICE and CBP agents receive concerning such recognition; and
5. All policies and procedures regarding the use of force by ICE and CBP agents, including but not limited to records regarding any training ICE and CBP agents receive concerning the use of force.

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. The Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations has a broad mandate to study or investigate “the efficiency and economy of operations of all branches of the Government.”<sup>14</sup> If you have any questions about this request, please contact Oversight Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051 or PSI Democratic staff at 202-224-4751. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations



Robert Garcia  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform

cc: Todd Lyons  
Acting Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Rodney S. Scott  
Commissioner  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

The Honorable James Comer  
Chairman  
United States House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

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<sup>14</sup> S. Res. 59, § 12(e)(1), 118th Cong., 1st Sess. (Feb. 15, 2023), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118thcongress/senate-resolution/59>.