

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, D.C. 20510**

March 27, 2020

Acting Director Matthew Albence  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
500 12th St. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Acting Director Albence,

We write with serious concerns about the public health risks of detainees at detention facilities operated by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) and contract facilities nationwide during the coronavirus (“COVID-19”) outbreak. We believe that the COVID-19 outbreak across the country merits an evaluation of existing procedures regarding humanitarian parole. We request ICE to immediately grant humanitarian parole to all vulnerable individuals with pending immigration-related, non-violent charges or convictions in detention facilities operated or contracted with the agency, evaluate all non-violent detainees for humanitarian parole — or other forms of parole they may be eligible for — who do not pose a public safety risk, and inform all detainees of their right to seek humanitarian release.


According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), vulnerable individuals, which include older adults, pregnant women, and people with serious underlying medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease, are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Detainees that are part of these vulnerable populations need to take actions to reduce their risk of getting sick with the disease such as avoiding crowds and limiting close contacts. Currently, detainees at ICE facilities are especially vulnerable to the spread of infection given their living situation. In addition, the facility staff, their families, and the public health of the surrounding communities are also greatly impacted by the threat of an outbreak.

The situation is compounded by our concern about the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s ability to protect the health and safety of detainees. Last year, detention facilities in Colorado, Arizona, and Texas instituted quarantines resulting from viral disease outbreaks among their detainee populations. Despite these public health issues, ICE expanded their capacities and transferred detainees into facilities impacted by these outbreaks. At the time, ICE showed no indication that they would provide additional health care staff or resources to address the viral disease outbreak. At the end of the viral disease outbreak, CDC reported a total of 898 confirmed and 19 states reported probable mumps cases in adult migrants detained in 57 facilities (34 private company operated facilities, 19 county jails that housed detainees, and four ICE-operated) between September 1, 2018 and August 22, 2019. There were 33 confirmed cases among the facility staff.

These disease outbreaks have raised serious questions about the existing public health standards and procedures in ICE detention facilities, medical staffing levels, and the rationale behind

detainee transfers. In light of the coronavirus pandemic, We request ICE to immediately grant humanitarian parole to all vulnerable individuals with pending immigration-related, non-violent charges or convictions in detention facilities operated or contracted with the agency, evaluate all non-violent detainees for humanitarian parole — or other forms of parole they may be eligible for — who do not pose a public safety risk, and inform all detainees of their right to seek humanitarian release. These actions would ensure the health and safety of the detainees in our government’s care, while also protecting the well-being of the neighboring communities during this public health crisis.

Sincerely,




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JASON CROW  
Member of Congress



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BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN  
Member of Congress




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MIKE QUIGLEY  
Member of Congress

/s/

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DIANA DEGETTE  
Member of Congress



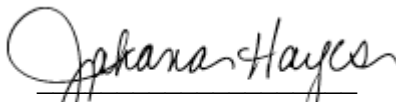
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JOE NEGUSE  
Member of Congress



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JAMES P. MCGOVERN  
Member of Congress



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JAHANA HAYES  
Member of Congress

/s/

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ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
Member of Congress

/s/

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ED PERLMUTTER  
Member of Congress

/s/

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DEB HAALAND  
Member of Congress

/s/

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JUAN VARGAS  
Member of Congress



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SUSAN A. DAVIS  
Member of Congress

/s/

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BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress

/s/

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EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress

/s/

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HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON JR.  
Member of Congress