

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 22, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Todd Lyons
Acting Director
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons:

On August 11, 2025, we conducted a congressional oversight visit of the Denver Contract Detention Facility located in Aurora, Colorado. Although the right of Members of Congress to conduct immediate, unannounced oversight visits of facilities operated by or for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is established in U.S. law, we provided advance notice of this visit.¹ Despite the advance notice of this visit, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel were unable to answer many of our questions, and we request answers to those and additional questions outlined in this letter no later than September 5, 2025.

In the Department's denials to Members of Congress who have attempted unannounced oversight of immigration detention facilities in recent months, the Department has stated that advanced notice is required to "vet visit requests to ensure they are for legitimate purposes." In making our intent to visit known, we also requested that ICE personnel attend the visit in order to receive and respond to our questions in a fulsome manner. Despite the Department "vetting" this request and sending multiple staff from ICE to this visit, they failed to answer many of our questions and repeatedly encouraged us to instead email ICE's Office of Congressional Relations (OCR). The inevitable delays caused by routing our questions through OCR, rather than the ICE employee leading the oversight visit, prevent meaningful oversight from taking place in a timely manner.

We request that you address the following:

1. What are the top five countries of origin for individuals currently detained at the facility?
2. Please confirm the total population of detainees detained at the facility disaggregated by gender.
3. How many detainees entered the facility in the week preceding our visit?

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/118/plaws/publ47/PLAW-118publ47.pdf>

4. How many detainees left the facility in the week preceding our visit? Of those, how many were deported and how many were released into the community?
5. Detainees in the facility are classified using a color-coded system that is, in part, based on an individual's criminal record. Please confirm the number of detainees belonging to each classification at this facility, including high, medium/high, medium/low, and low.
 - a. Please describe the system the Department uses to award points and whether the classification system has changed in the last year.
6. Of the individuals detained at this facility, what percentage do not have a record that includes conviction(s) for a violent crime?
7. The air conditioning in at least one of the housing pods was not functioning for a period of time in July. How long was the air conditioning not in operation?
 - a. When was the decision made to move detainees out of the B2 housing pod as a result, and what other steps were taken to manage the temperature in the facility during that time?
 - b. What other housing pods were impacted by this outage?
 - c. Did ICE require that GEO staff track the temperature in the housing pods while the air conditioning was not functioning properly? If so, please provide that information.
8. We have received reports on several occasions of water outages in the facility, including in July and August of this year. On each occasion, how long was the water system not in operation and what was determined to be the cause of the outage?
 - a. What efforts were made to provide potable water to impacted detainees?
 - b. Was the water provided safe for drinking and personal hygiene?
9. We understand from GEO staff that counts are occurring in the facility four times per day and that the timing recently changed. During these counts, detainees are in lockdown and may lack access to legal assistance and other resources. Was ICE involved in the decision to change when these counts are conducted and does ICE track how long counts take?
 - a. How many counts are contract facilities required to conduct per day?
 - b. Has the number of counts completed at this facility increased in recent months? If so, for what reasons?
 - c. Why did the timing of these counts change?
10. Detention standards require that detainees in ICE facilities be able to make calls for free to a specific list of free legal service providers, but otherwise the cost per minute of each call varies by facility. What is the cost, per minute, of domestic and international calls made from this facility?
 - a. Is this rate determined by ICE, the GEO Group, or the phone company contracted to provide service at this facility?
 - b. Which phone company is contracted to provide service at this facility?
 - c. Are detainees provided notice in advance when their access to phones will be limited and under what circumstances is access to phones limited?

11. Upon entering the facility, detainees are provided with a detention handbook and view a video about their right to legal counsel. In recent months, local legal organizations have been prohibited from conducting regular legal orientation programs that they were previously permitted to hold in this facility. For what reason has ICE prevented the resumption of these programs?
 - a. Have previously approved local legal organizations been prohibited from conducting such legal orientation programs at other facilities elsewhere in the U.S.?
 - b. If so, please list the facilities and the previously approved local legal organizations.
12. Posted in multiple places in this facility is a sign reading, “Do You want to Return Home? . . . Requesting to return home now may give you the opportunity to legally enter the United States in the future.” These posters include a phone number to call or the option to speak with an ICE officer. If detainees choose to speak with an ICE officer at this facility, is there a script that the officer follows or a document that outlines the self-deportation process?
 - a. If the detainee calls that number, are they connected with an ICE officer?
 - b. If so, does the ICE officer on that phone line follow a script or document to explain the self-deportation process, including a potential 3 to 10-year bar from reentry, abandonment of pending adjustment of status applications, and the impact on future visa petitions?
 - c. What languages is this service available in?
13. We have received numerous reports from detainees that they are being pressured to self-deport, including repeat visits by ICE staff – some during the early morning or late-night hours. Are ICE employees directed to initiate conversations with detainees about self-deportation?
 - a. If so, please provide the ICE policy guidance that outlines when and how often these conversations are to occur and what information is to be provided to detainees.
14. An ICE employee confirmed reporting that the former Hudson Correctional Facility in Weld County, Colorado, is under contract with ICE for the purpose of immigration detention. Congressional staff submitted an inquiry to DHS OCR about the status of this facility over two weeks ago and have not received a response. Please confirm when this facility will begin operations.
 - a. Will the facility be operated by ICE or by a contract company?
 - b. If it is privately operated, which contract company will operate this facility?
 - c. What is the contracted capacity and what is the maximum detainee capacity at this facility?
 - d. What is the annual value of this contract, and what is the source of funds that will be used to fund this facility’s operations?

15. Are there any other facilities in Colorado that are under contract, or under consideration for contract, with ICE for the purpose of immigration detention?
- Recent reporting by *The Washington Post* includes the potential use of both the former Huerfano County Correctional Center in Walsenburg, owned by CoreCivic, and the Southern Ute Indian Adult Detention Center in Ignacio as additional potential immigration detention centers in Colorado.
 - Will these facilities be operated by ICE or by a contract company?
 - If they are privately operated, which contract company will operate each new facility?
 - What is the contracted capacity and what is the maximum detainee capacity at these facilities?
 - What is the annual value of such contracts, and what is the source of funds that will be used to fund such contracts?
16. Under the same reported expansion plans, the Denver Contract Detention Facility would see an expansion of beds from 1,360 to a maximum capacity of 1,530. Is this true, and if so, when would this expansion take effect?
- How many total beds would these expansion plans bring to the state of Colorado?
17. In order for our offices to complete casework and help detained individuals communicate with a federal agency, they must sign ICE Form 60-001, commonly referred to as a privacy release form. In recent weeks, ICE officials have prevented Congressional staff from completing privacy release forms during regular oversight visits, stating that “requests for and completion of privacy waivers must be accomplished of the detainee’s own volition [*sic*].” Information provided to our staff has been conflicting and has impeded our ability to complete congressional casework. Is it now ICE policy that congressional staff be prohibited from getting completed Form 60-001’s during the course of an oversight visit?
- Is it ICE policy that, in order to complete this form prior to a visit from congressional staff, a detainee must either access the form during their time in the legal library and remit it to a congressional office, or have a congressional office mail them the form?
 - Does ICE policy permit congressional offices to schedule a visitation, or legal visitation, with a detainee in order for our offices to complete Form 60-001? If so, how many days’ notice is required for these visits? If not, why not?
 - In the absence of an in-person meeting with congressional staff or Members of Congress for the purpose of obtaining signed privacy waivers, who is expected to complete the witness signature section?
18. On average, how often are detainees being transferred between different facilities and for what purposes are those transfers conducted?
- Are transfers conducted on a regular schedule?
 - If a detainee is going to be transferred, how much notice are they provided before being moved to a new facility?

- c. When detainees are transferred from Aurora to another facility by bus, what is the average length of that journey? Under what length of journey are detainees provided with food, water, or access to a restroom?
- 19. Please confirm the current number of medical and mental health staff assigned to the facility, broken down by role (i.e. physician, licensed practical nurse, registered nurse, dentist, psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor, etc.)?
 - a. What is the average wait time for detainees to access medical and mental health care after submitting the request?
 - b. How many detainees have been taken by ambulance for emergency treatment over the past six months?
 - c. If a detainee has been prescribed medication prior to entering the facility, what steps are taken to ensure continuity of care?
 - d. If a detainee presents with a mental health condition upon entry, what services are required to be provided while they are detained at this facility?
- 20. How many detainees are currently in segregation/housed in the Restricted Housing Unit, for what stated reasons, and what is the average duration of their stay in segregation?
 - a. Please provide that data for the last six months.
- 21. What is the current number of ICE and contract staff at the facility assigned to legal visitation coordination, case management, and detainee intake/release?
- 22. In the written statement attributed to the ICE Assistant Director of Public Affairs Emily Covington sent to CBS News Colorado on Tuesday, August 12, two local constituents being held at the facility were publicly named. Is this a violation of The Privacy Act of 1974 and/or ICE policy?

Oversight of these federal institutions is a fundamental responsibility for each of us as members of Congress, and immigration detention facilities demand oversight and accountability to ensure that detainees are treated with dignity and respect. However, the administration is creating greater bureaucratic hurdles for our office when attempting to complete casework on behalf of individuals detained at these facilities. Detainees may have legitimate claims for protection and efforts to create lags in the time it takes for members, and our staff, to gain access to this facility or to mail privacy release forms back and forth between detainees and congressional offices, solely serves to delay this process until an individual has inevitably been transferred to another facility or been discouraged from seeking assistance they have every right to.

Whether an oversight visit is announced or unannounced, ICE is seemingly more prepared to ensure the spaces we see are mopped – in our case by detainees themselves – than they are with answering Members’ questions regarding the treatment of individuals held in detention. We expect your prompt and thorough reply no later than September 5, 2025.

Sincerely,



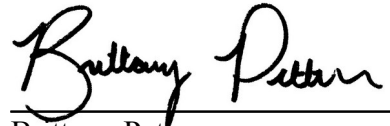
Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
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Diana DeGette
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