

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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June 18, 2025

The Honorable Kashyap Patel  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Director Patel:

Last week, Alex Padilla, the senior Senator from California, attempted to ask Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem a question during a public press conference in a federal building in Los Angeles, California. He was dragged out of the room, tackled to the ground, and handcuffed by multiple armed federal agents, including agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).<sup>1</sup> Can you explain why asking government officials to answer basic questions is such a threat to this Administration that it would resort to such tactics against a United States Senator?

This Administration has much to answer for. It has sent masked agents in unmarked vans to disappear people from American streets, it has violated the rights of the people of the United States to free speech and due process, it has spirited people away to the torture prisons of foreign dictators, and it has defied the orders of judges. This assault on Senator Padilla, captured on video and broadcast worldwide,<sup>2</sup> is another vivid episode of authoritarian tactics and brute force being used to crush oversight and critical questioning—including from sitting Members of Congress exercising their constitutional duty. I write to demand that you immediately provide answers and conduct an investigation into the FBI's role in this disgraceful and indefensible assault of a Member of Congress.

Last Thursday, Senator Padilla was at the Wilshire Federal Building in downtown Los Angeles, waiting for a scheduled briefing with U.S. Army officials, when he learned that Secretary Noem was holding an “impromptu” press conference down the hall.<sup>3</sup> Senator Padilla decided to drop in and listen to the press conference. According to Senator Padilla, he was

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Shabad & Jacob Soboroff, *Sen. Alex Padilla Is Forcibly Removed from DHS Secretary Kristi Noem's News Conference in Los Angeles*, NBC NEWS (June 12, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/sen-alex-padilla-forcibly-removed-dhs-sec-kristi-noems-press-conferenc-rcna212688>.

<sup>2</sup> Jacob Soboroff (@JacobSoboroff), X (June 12, 2025, 2:38 PM), <https://x.com/jacobsoboroff/status/1933232550409089128>.

<sup>3</sup> Shawn Hubler, Jennifer Medina & Jill Cowan, *Calif. Senator Forcibly Removed and Handcuffed After Interrupting Noem*, N.Y. TIMES (June 12, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/12/us/politics/senator-alex-padilla-handcuffed.html>.

escorted by members of the National Guard and the FBI, who knew exactly who he was, as he walked through the building.<sup>4</sup> Once at the press conference, Senator Padilla tried to ask a question, clearly identifying himself, stating: “I am Senator Alex Padilla. I have questions for the Secretary.”<sup>5</sup> All of this was captured on video—incredibly, the same video that the DHS posted to falsely claim that Senator Padilla “interrupted a live press conference *without identifying himself*.”<sup>6</sup>

In response, federal agents grabbed him and forcibly dragged him out of the room. Once outside the room, agents wearing FBI vests forced Senator Padilla to his knees, wrenched his arms backward, slammed him face-first onto the ground, and pinned him down. With his face pressed into the floor, Senator Padilla was handcuffed while repeatedly asking why he was detained, receiving no response from the FBI, until he was taken further away, and an aide to Secretary Noem instructed them to release him.<sup>7</sup> The agents released Senator Padilla shortly thereafter without any explanation or justification for their use of force. Secretary Noem falsely claimed that Senator Padilla had “burst into the room, started lunging towards the podium, interrupting me and elevating his voice, and was stopped, did not identify himself, and was removed from the room.”<sup>8</sup> Videos of the incident clearly refute each of these bogus claims.<sup>9</sup>

It was just a few weeks ago that a federal magistrate judge excoriated Department of Justice (DOJ) lawyers for the baseless arrest of Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, admonishing the DOJ that “[a]n arrest of a public figure is not a preliminary investigative tool. It is a severe action.... It should only be undertaken after a thorough, dispassionate investigation of credible evidence.”<sup>10</sup>

Your agents obviously did not take this admonishment to heart. Instead, they unlawfully assaulted and detained Senator Padilla—the most recent in a string of increasingly flagrant abuses of power by the Trump Administration to deter congressional oversight and intimidate Members of Congress. A few weeks ago, the Trump DOJ and the partisan Interim U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey, Alina Habba, brought absurd criminal charges against Representative LaMonica McIver, after she exercised her statutory and constitutional right, as a

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<sup>4</sup> MSNBC, ‘*It’s all BS coming from Trump*’: Sen. Padilla gets emotional after forcible removal from DHS presser, YOUTUBE (June 12, 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1GdIvGvpf0>.

<sup>5</sup> Jacob Soboroff (@JacobSoboroff), X (June 12, 2025, 2:38 PM), <https://x.com/jacobsoboroff/status/1933232550409089128>.

<sup>6</sup> Dep’t of Homeland Security (@DHSgov), X (June 12, 2025, 2:55 PM), <https://x.com/DHSgov/status/1933236707060822447>.

<sup>7</sup> Jacob Soboroff (@JacobSoboroff), X (June 12, 2025, 2:38 PM), <https://x.com/jacobsoboroff/status/1933232550409089128>; MSNBC, ‘*It’s all BS coming from Trump*’: Sen. Padilla gets emotional after forcible removal from DHS presser, YOUTUBE (June 12, 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1GdIvGvpf0>.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Shabad, Jacob Soboroff & Zoë Richards, *Sen. Alex Padilla is forcibly removed from DHS Secretary Kristi Noem’s news conference in Los Angeles*, NBC NEWS (June 12, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/sen-alex-padilla-forcibly-removed-dhs-sec-kristi-noems-press-conferenc-rcna212688>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> Sophie Nieto-Munoz, *Judge Admonishes Prosecutors Over Handling of Newark Mayor’s Arrest*, N.J. MONITOR (May 21, 2025), <https://newjerseymonitor.com/2025/05/21/judge-admonishes-prosecutors-over-handling-of-newark-mayors-arrest/>.

sitting Member of Congress, to conduct an oversight visit of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility.<sup>11</sup> The visit was interrupted by ICE agents' baseless arrest of Mayor Baraka and an ensuing melee. The Trump Administration has used the chaos caused by its own agents to charge Rep. McIver with two felonies and a misdemeanor carrying a combined statutory maximum of 17 years in prison—utterly baseless charges that constitute a grotesque abuse of power.<sup>12</sup> And earlier this month, ICE forced their way into the Manhattan district office of Representative Jerry Nadler and handcuffed his staffer—again, without any lawful basis.<sup>13</sup> Of course, President Trump's recent unlawful deployment of military forces in Los Angeles—which a federal district judge has declared to be unconstitutional and illegal—elevates the same essential abuse of power to a grander scale, attempting to silence an entire community and city for daring to question ICE's brutal tactics and to voice dissent.<sup>14</sup>

Like it or not, the people of the United States enjoy broad and robust First Amendment rights and now deserve urgent answers from their government about these highhanded authoritarian tactics. A week ago, federal agents detained a nine-months-pregnant U.S. citizen in Hawthorn, California, after shoving her during an immigration raid.<sup>15</sup> She was arrested despite repeatedly informing agents she was a citizen and was later hospitalized with sharp abdominal pain.<sup>16</sup> In Boyle Heights, California, federal agents in unmarked vehicles rammed a car at an intersection while attempting to make an arrest, and then aimed rifles and deployed chemical irritants against a mother and her young child trapped inside the car.<sup>17</sup> When Senator Padilla attempted to get answers from Secretary Noem, on behalf of his constituents, he was assaulted and handcuffed, including by agents of the FBI.

Accordingly, I now demand a full investigation of the FBI's role in the incidents of June 12 and the unlawful assault and detention of Senator Padilla. In addition, please provide the following information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 25, 2025:

1. A detailed accounting of the FBI's operational involvement in the June 12, 2025, incident, including:
  - a. A timeline of the FBI's activities;

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<sup>11</sup> Steve Benen, *Democratic Rep. LaMonica McIver Charged After Visiting ICE Facility in New Jersey*, MSNBC (May 19, 2025), <https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/maddowblog/rep-lamonica-mciver-arrested-ice-new-jersey-alina-habba-rcna207334>.

<sup>12</sup> Ankush Khardori, *Trump's DOJ Indicted a Democratic Congresswoman. The Case Could Fall Apart.*, POLITICO (June 10, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2025/06/10/indictment-lamonica-mciver-flop-column-00398777>.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher Maag, *Aide to Rep. Nadler Is Handcuffed Amid Confrontation With Federal Agents*, N.Y. TIMES (May 31, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/31/nyregion/nadler-aide-handcuffed-federal-agents.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Adam Liptak, *Trump Declares Dubious Emergencies to Amass Power, Scholars Say*, N.Y. TIMES (June 10, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/10/us/politics/trump-emergency-powers-invasion.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Nicole Acevedo, *Pregnant U.S. Citizen Went to the Hospital After Immigration Agents Detained Her*, NBC NEWS (June 10, 2025) <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/pregnant-us-citizen-went-hospital-immigration-agents-detained-rcna212033>.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Buchanan & Richard Winton, *Federal Agents Use Vehicles to Trap and Arrest Driver in Boyle Heights, Leaving Child and Passenger Behind*, L.A. TIMES (June 11, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-06-11/boyle-heights-feds-crash-detain-driver>.

- b. The chain of command involved in authorizing or overseeing the agents' actions; and
  - c. The specific justification offered by FBI personnel, if any, for the use of physical force against Senator Padilla.
2. A formal statement from the FBI addressing whether the conduct of its agents constituted a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 351(e) (Assaulting a Member of Congress), and whether the matter has been referred to the DOJ's Public Integrity Section or any prosecutorial office.
  3. Copies of all documents or communications—written, electronic, or otherwise—exchanged between the DOJ, FBI, DHS, and U.S. Secret Service regarding Senator Padilla and the events of June 12, 2025. This includes emails, memoranda, operational directives, and post-incident assessments.

Finally, please reach out to my staff to arrange a briefing addressing the following issues as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 25, 2025:

1. Whether any disciplinary or administrative measures have been taken by the FBI in response to this incident.
2. Whether the FBI has initiated or requested an independent investigation into the incident, and whether the scope of that investigation includes patterns of unlawful or excessive force employed by federal agents under the pretext of immigration enforcement.

I look forward to your prompt response to this important oversight request.

Very truly yours,

  
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Jamie Raskin  
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman