

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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October 20, 2025

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

Mr. Todd M. Lyons
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons:

Why do you continue unlawfully detaining U.S. citizens?

In February 2025, we wrote to express our serious concerns that U.S. citizens were being wrongfully detained during immigration enforcement operations. Unfortunately, your response was flippant and unserious. Rather than address the specific questions we posed, you simply reiterated existing policy—without providing any assurance that Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel are actually following that policy. DHS and ICE are doing nothing to acknowledge or protect the fundamental rights of U.S. citizens during immigration raids.

This Administration cannot hide behind a broad policy statement, as it continues to unlawfully detain U.S. citizens as part of indiscriminate immigration raids. As we noted in our February 2025 letter¹, ICE policy explicitly prohibits detaining U.S. citizens and requires that any U.S. citizenship claims by detainees be promptly and carefully investigated. In response, you claimed that “ICE has significant protections in place to ensure U.S. citizens are not mistakenly arrested, detained, or removed, and claims to U.S. citizenship are evaluated as quickly and thoroughly as possible.”² You are in clear violation of that policy. DHS and ICE continue to wrongfully detain U.S. citizens—sometimes with violent force—while failing to investigate these cases with the urgency and care required:

¹ Letter from The Hon. Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on the Judiciary, and The Hon. Pramila Jayapal, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security and Enforcement, to The Hon. Kristi Noem, Secretary, Dep’t of Homeland Security, and The Hon. Caleb Vitello, Acting Director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Feb. 4, 2025) https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/migrated/UploadedFiles/2025-02-04_Raskin_Jayapal_to_Noem_DHS_Vitello_ICE.pdf.

² Letter from The Hon. Kristi Noem, Secretary, Dep’t of Homeland Security, to The Hon. Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on the Judiciary (Apr. 24, 2025), <https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/25-07254-raskin-s1-signed-responses-4.24.25.pdf>.

- In Chicago, Rodrick Johnson, a 67-year-old U.S. citizen, was detained during an immigration raid on an apartment building.³ His door was broken down, and he was dragged out in zip ties and left tied up outside the building for nearly **three hours**.⁴
- George Retes, a U.S. citizen and Army veteran, was detained during an immigration raid on a farm in California.⁵ He was pepper-sprayed before being dragged from his vehicle and pinned down by federal agents.⁶ Even though he told immigration agents that he was a U.S. citizen and had identification in his car, the agents refused to check and confirm his citizenship.⁷ Mr. Retes was detained in a jail cell for **three days** and was not allowed to make a phone call or see an attorney.⁸
- Another U.S. citizen, Julio Noriega, 54, was handing out copies of his resume to local businesses in Berwyn, Illinois, when ICE officers grabbed him from behind, handcuffed him, and loaded him into a van.⁹ They confiscated his wallet which contained his Social Security card and driver's license, documents which would help prove his citizenship.¹⁰ Mr. Noriega was released **ten hours** later, after agents checked his wallet and realized that he was a U.S. citizen.¹¹
- Perhaps most disturbingly, ICE arrested U.S. citizen Leonardo Garcia Venegas *twice* during worksite raids in Alabama.¹² Even after he produced his REAL ID, agents refused to release him.¹³

³ Cindy Hernandez, *Massive immigration raid on Chicago apartment building leaves residents reeling: 'I feel defeated'*, WBEZ CHICAGO (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://www.wbez.org/immigration/2025/10/01/massive-immigration-raid-on-chicago-apartment-building-leaves-residents-reeling-i-feel-defeated>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ George Retes, *I'm a U.S. citizen who was wrongly arrested and held by ICE. Here's why you could be next*, SAN FRAN. CHRON. (Sept. 16, 2025), <https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/ice-racial-profiling-21045429.php>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Conor Friedersdorf, *A U.S. Citizen Detained by ICE for Three Days Tells His Story*, THE ATLANTIC (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/09/george-retes-ice-detained-us-citizen/684152/>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Maria Luisa Paul, *As Trump cracks down on immigration, U.S. citizens are among those snared*, WASH. POST (Apr. 5, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2025/04/05/us-citizens-deported-immigration/>; Jazmine Ulloa, Allison McCann & Jennifer Medina, *'I'm From Here!': U.S. Citizens Are Ending Up in Trump's Dragnet*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 29, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/29/us/trump-immigration-agents-us-citizens.html>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Laura Romero, *US-born citizen sues after twice being arrested by immigration agents*, ABC NEWS (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/us-born-citizen-sues-after-arrested-immigration-agents/story?id=126129734>.

¹³ *Id.*

These are just some of the examples of wrongful arrests¹⁴ that have occurred since your response to our February letter. Recent investigations by the *New York Times* and *ProPublica*, based on publicly available data, document a growing number of U.S. citizens being dragged, tackled, beaten, tased, shot and detained, sometimes for days, during immigration enforcement raids.¹⁵ This lawless “detain first, ask questions later” approach to immigration enforcement is terrorizing communities across the country. Masked, armed agents are snatching people on the street and refusing to identify themselves. U.S. citizens are now afraid to speak Spanish in public and are carrying their passports everywhere they go.¹⁶ This Administration’s failure to investigate or even acknowledge that these indiscriminate immigration raids are cancelling the rights of U.S. citizens is dangerous. We once again demand that you immediately provide a full accounting of all cases in which U.S. citizens have been detained since January 20, 2025, and explain any concrete steps your agencies are implementing to prevent such abuses from continuing. Please provide the following information no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 3, 2025:

1. A list of each incident where a U.S. citizen was detained during immigration enforcement activities since January 20, 2025, including:
 - a. The total number of U.S. citizens detained;
 - b. The name of each U.S. citizen detained;
 - c. The age of each U.S. citizen detained;
 - d. The location where the U.S. citizen was detained;
 - e. The length of time the U.S. citizen was detained;
 - f. The criminal record, if any, of each individual detained; and
 - g. The name of each agency that was involved in the immigration enforcement operation.

¹⁴ See Sara Tenenbaum, *Forest Park officials say ICE agents detained U.S. citizens with excessive force at Concordia Cemetery*, CBS NEWS (Oct. 13, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/forest-park-ice-agents-excessive-force-concordia-cemetery/>; John Garcia, et al., *2 apparent US citizens swept up in Elgin ICE raid documented on Noem's social media*, ABC7 CHICAGO (Sept. 16, 2025); Sam Sevin, *US citizens jailed in LA Ice raids speak out: ‘They came ready to attack’*, THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 5, 2025); Cerise Castle, *Border Patrol and ICE Agents Are Arresting U.S. Citizens in Immigration Raids*, THE AMERICAN PROSPECT (Aug. 5, 2025), <https://prospect.org/justice/2025-08-05-border-patrol-ice-arresting-us-citizens-los-angeles/>; Geoff Pursinger, *After ICE arrest U.S. citizen in Milwaukie, officials call for investigation*, OREGON CAPITAL INSIDER (Oct. 10, 2025), <https://oregoncapitalinsider.com/2025/10/10/after-ice-arrest-u-s-citizen-in-milwaukie-officials-call-for-investigation/>; *Fact Sheet: The Truth About Mass Deportations – Even U.S. Citizens Are Being Ensnared*, AMERICA’S VOICE (Oct. 7, 2025), <https://americasvoice.org/uncategorized/the-truth-about-mass-deportations-even-u-s-citizens-are-being-ensnared/>.

¹⁵ See Jazmine Ulloa, Allison McCann & Jennifer Medina, *‘I’m From Here!’: U.S. Citizens Are Ending Up in Trump’s Dragnet*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 29, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/29/us/trump-immigration-agents-us-citizens.html>; Nicole Foy, *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>.

¹⁶ Grace Berry & Isabella Gomez, *Amid rising fears of racial profiling and ICE detention, US citizens are carrying passports and avoiding Spanish in public*, CRONKITE NEWS (Sept. 24, 2025), <https://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2025/09/24/citizens-carry-passports-amid-rising-fears-ice-encounters/>.

The Honorable Kristi Noem

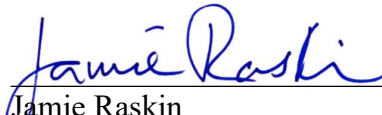
Mr. Todd M. Lyons

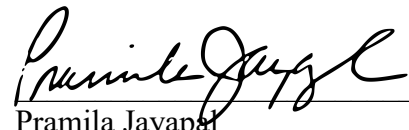
Page 4

2. Have there been any changes or updates to ICE Policy No. 16001.2: *Investigating the Potential U.S. Citizenship of Individuals Encountered by ICE*, in response to recent incidents? If not, why are DHS and ICE not doing more to ensure that U.S. citizens are not detained during immigration enforcement operations and that any claims to U.S. citizenship are promptly and carefully investigated?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Very truly yours,


Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member


Pramila Jayapal
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Immigration
Integrity, Security and Enforcement

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan, Chairman

The Honorable Tom McClintock, Chairman
Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security and Enforcement