

January 15, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leader Thune, and Leader Schumer:

As a coalition of 74 civil rights, faith, and advocacy organizations, we write to demand that Congress take immediate action to check and hold accountable this Administration's ongoing, lawless campaign that is terrorizing American communities.

The horrific killing of Renee Nicole Good, a U.S. citizen in Minneapolis, by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer last week has shocked the conscience of our country. In recent months, additional incidents — including a shooting involving a Border Patrol agent in Portland and other confrontations resulting in serious injury or death — have underscored urgent questions about when and how federal officers use force.

A lack of public accountability and even disinformation spread by public officials about recent events appears intended to indicate that longstanding and well-established legal and constitutional rights are irrelevant in the context of immigration enforcement activities.

These actions and this attitude are unacceptable and un-American. Given the ongoing patterns of recklessness, violence, and harm—including record-high deaths in immigration custody, continuing, egregious assaults on U.S. citizens and immigrant communities, and blatant racial profiling—Congress must not, at this moment, write the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) a blank check. Instead, Congress must enact clear, enforceable guardrails in FY2026 appropriations or other legislation that protect constitutional rights, ensure transparency, and curb the abuse of power we see daily across the country.

It should be obvious that Congress has the authority under our Constitution to put conditions on the executive branch. When it fails to do its duty—or even to perform oversight—under our system of separation of powers, Congress is responsible for the consequences.

Last year, Congress provided this Administration with unprecedented resources for immigration enforcement, including \$170 billion and 10,000 additional ICE agents. The results of this funding surge have been both predictable and alarming. Underqualified and poorly trained agents now operating under aggressive and unaccountable leadership are sowing chaos, fear, and committing rampant violations of due process.

Individuals are detained without access to counsel, clergy, or family and held in deplorable [conditions](#) that fail to follow basic standards of human dignity and lack appropriate health care, even for those who are pregnant or nursing. Families [cannot locate](#) detained loved ones because they have been moved away. [Businesses have closed](#) because customers are too afraid to leave their homes. Children are not going to their local schools out of fear.

Basic transparency is lacking. Because the federal government maintains no comprehensive records on wrongful detentions, the true scope of violations is unquestionably larger. Videos, photos, local reporting, and court findings reveal a consistent pattern of abusive tactics: masked officers refusing to identify themselves, warrantless arrests, racial profiling, and expedited removals that deny individuals the ability to challenge mistakes or present evidence.

Last year marked [a shameful record](#) for the number of deaths in custody over the past two decades. Yet the federal government is failing to maintain transparent records on such deaths, despite requirements in the [Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013](#). Moreover, a [ProPublica investigation](#) documented more than 170 U.S. citizens—including children and veterans—wrongfully detained by immigration agents, with some kicked, dragged, handcuffed, or held for days without access to loved ones or counsel.

Congress Must Address Misuse of Public Data and Creeping Surveillance

The Administration is also rapidly expanding DHS surveillance practices, threatening the privacy and civil liberties of all Americans. Federal agencies are [deploying sweeping](#) dragnet [surveillance technologies](#) and using rulemaking to indicate that they intend to [build extensive dossiers](#) of sensitive personal information including facial scans, iris scans, voiceprints, DNA, palm prints, and other biometric data from immigrants and U.S. citizens alike. New technologies [reported](#) as acquired by ICE will allow social media and phone surveillance of entire neighborhoods or groups of people.

In a betrayal of public trust, federal agencies across the government are under pressure from DHS to repurpose administrative data—information provided when paying taxes or applying for housing, driver's licenses, or public services for which individuals or their family members are fully eligible —turning routine interactions with government into potential traps and poisoning the ordinary operations of a democracy. These practices chill the willingness of all residents, including U.S. citizens, to pay taxes, access vital services and exercise their rights, and represent a profound threat to the Fourth and Fifth Amendment protections of privacy and due process.

Congress Should Respond to Unlawful Use of the Military

The Administration is also escalating its use of military resources in ways that further endanger constitutional rights and safety. Although the Supreme Court recently limited the legal grounds on which troops can be deployed, National Guard troops and tactical federal

agents have been deployed in U.S. cities for immigration enforcement—deployments that disregard long-standing limits on military involvement in civilian law enforcement. Instead of preserving public safety, these operations are provoking confrontations, intimidating communities, and attempting to normalize the inappropriate use of force in civilian settings. Congress cannot give a blank check to an administration that has shown such disregard for the rule of law.

To rein in these abuses, any FY2026 appropriations legislation must:

Protect Communities from Misuse of Power

- Prohibit deployment of service members or military resources for domestic immigration enforcement or policing operations.
- Codify restrictions on immigration enforcement actions in sensitive locations, such as schools, hospitals, courts, and places of worship.
- End the ability of immigration officials to detain and arrest individuals without a judicial warrant, and require immigration officials to clearly document probable cause of removability for every arrest or detention.
- Ban the use of masks by federal agents and require clear identifying insignia and body-worn cameras and dashcams for vehicles with publicly accessible footage.
- Suspend 287(g) agreements that delegate immigration enforcement to local law enforcement until independent oversight and strict accountability measures are in place.
- Limit DHS's reprogramming and transfer authority, including preventing reprogramming and transferring funds for detention. Require reporting on personnel assigned to immigration enforcement responsibilities across federal agencies and the impacts of this diversion of resources from prior assignments.
- Require rigorous training standards for immigration agents, including de-escalation training, rigorous background checks, and restored hiring standards. Strengthen training standards for the licensing and use of firearms. Bar the use of cash bonuses as hiring incentives.
- Prohibit Customs and Border Protection from conducting immigration operations in the interior of the country.

Restore Due Process

- Require accurate and transparent reporting and independent investigation into deaths occurring in custody or detention facilities.
- Reform qualified immunity so that U.S. citizens and others subjected to wrongful arrest, assault, or detention by federal agents can more easily seek redress for legal or constitutional violations. Require full public reporting on the frequency, circumstances, and resolution of such cases.
- Bar the use of personally identifiable information collected by federal agencies for non-immigration purposes for immigration enforcement purposes.
- Prohibit dragnet surveillance activities that collect, store, and share biometric data or other kinds of highly sensitive personal information without individualized suspicion and judicial authorization, including social media and phone surveillance.
- Prevent any increase in funding for detention beds and require steps to restore due process and create humane and safe conditions.
- Ensure detained individuals have timely, meaningful access to family members and legal counsel and prohibit transfers that would impede this access.
- Prohibit detention of pregnant, postpartum, and nursing individuals. Ensure that detained children have assistance of counsel, and that there is documented parental knowledge and approval of any steps taken with regard to the child.
- Require accurate and transparent reporting and independent investigation into U.S. citizens and others who are harmed or wrongfully detained by ICE, including public disclosure of the frequency, circumstances, and resolution of such cases.

We urge you to reject funding for unchecked immigration enforcement and surveillance and stand with our communities as we seek to end this needless violence. Congress must condition funding on meaningful reforms and legal standards that restore common-sense transparency and accountability for government and uphold our nation's democratic and constitutional rights.

Sincerely,

UnidosUS
Advancing Justice – AAJC
America's Voice
American Oversight

Aquí: The Accountability Movement
Children's Defense Fund
First Focus Campaign for Children
Hispanic Federation
Japanese American Citizens League
LatinoJustice PRLDEF
Latino Victory Project
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Mi Familia Vota
NAACP
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
National Urban League
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
Stop AAPI Hate — San Francisco, CA
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
United Church of Christ
United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry
Voto Latino

State/Local Organizations

AAPI Equity Alliance — Los Angeles, CA
Adelante Mujeres — Forest Grove, OR
Austin Region Justice for Our Neighbors — Austin, TX
Bienestar — Hillsboro, OR
Bienestar Human Services — Los Angeles, CA
Building Skills Partnership (BSP) — Los Angeles, CA
California Immigrant Policy Center — Los Angeles, CA
Canal Alliance — San Rafael, CA
Caridad Center, Inc. — Boynton Beach, FL
Casa Central Social Services Corporation — Chicago, IL
Central American Resource Center — Washington, DC
Centro Cultural — Cornelius, OR
Centro Legal de la Raza — Oakland, CA
Chicago Alliance for Collaborative Effort (CACE) — Chicago, IL
Chicago Urban League — Chicago, IL
Chicano Federation — San Diego, CA
Chinese American Service League — Chicago, IL
Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization (CLLARO) — Denver, CO
Conexion Americas — Nashville, TN
East Bay Spanish Speaking Citizens' Foundation — Oakland, CA
East Boston Community Council — Boston, MA

Edu-Futuro — Arlington, VA
Faith in Action East Bay — Oakland, CA
Family Focus — Chicago, IL
Frontera Federation — Eagle Pass, TX
Illinois Black Advocacy Initiative — Chicago, IL
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights — Chicago, IL
Illinois Justice Project — Chicago, IL
Illinois Migrant Council — Crystal Lake, IL
Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef) — Los Angeles, CA
Income Movement — Portland, OR
Instituto del Progreso Latino — Chicago, IL
Latino Leadership, Inc. — Orlando, FL
Latino Memphis — Memphis, TN
Latino Policy Forum — Chicago, IL
Metropolitan Family Services — Chicago, IL
Mi Casa Resource Center — Denver, CO
Montebello Housing Development Corporation — Montebello, CA
Multicultural Family Center — Sherman, TX
National Hispanic Media Coalition — Los Angeles, CA
Oasis Legal Services — Berkeley, CA
PODER — Chicago, IL
Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, Inc. — Perth Amboy, NJ
Serving at-risk families everywhere, Inc. — Anderson, SC
Sociedad Latina — Boston, MA
Street Level Health Project — Oakland, CA
The Tiyya Foundation — Los Angeles, CA
The Unity Council — Oakland, CA
Visionary Home Builders of California, Inc. — Stockton, CA

cc:

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Mark Amodei, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security
The Honorable Henry Cuellar, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Patty Murray, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Katie Britt, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security
The Honorable Chris Murphy, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security