

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 29, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE  
Washington, DC 20528-0525

The Honorable Todd Blanche  
Acting Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Secretary Mullin and Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche:

We are appalled by recent events at the Delaney Hall Detention Facility where members of Congress, families, and advocates have witnessed both the inhumane treatment of detainees and the deployment of escalatory tactics by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). We urge you to immediately cease the use of force and escalatory tactics by ICE agents at Delaney Hall facility. The measures currently being deployed by ICE agents leave no room for reasonable negotiation on improving the conditions at Delaney Hall and ensuring the safety of detainees, their loved ones, and advocates.

As Members of Congress, we have had the unique opportunity to enter the facility and hear directly from the detainees about the poor conditions at Delaney Hall; the problems are deep, serious, and systemic. We have also had the opportunity to speak with family members and advocates, and I can assure you that their protests outside of the facility are the result of similarly cruel, un-American policy decisions at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice that have been exacerbated under the Trump Administration. While we do not believe Delaney Hall should continue to operate and is unfit to house detainees, as an immediate step, we urge you to require GEO Group to operate the facility in a manner consistent with current law and the U.S. Constitution or to take immediate steps to close the facility.

### **Congress Has a Constitutional Right to Conduct Oversight at Detention Facilities**

DHS has intentionally abdicated its responsibility to conduct meaningful oversight of detention facilities by shifting resources and funding away from the offices that conduct this work. Under President Trump and former Secretary Kristi Noem, the Office of Detention Oversight (ODO), the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), and the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO) have been incapacitated at scale.<sup>1</sup> The Department's abdication has led to an alarming increase in deaths in detention,<sup>2</sup> the spread of disease within facilities, limited access to medical care, and inhumane conditions for detainees without procedures in place to provide resources and oversight at the facilities where these incidents occurred. Justifiably, Congress has responded to DHS's abdication by exercising, with increased frequency, its constitutional oversight authority at immigration detention facilities. Instead of adhering to the laws and respecting the Constitution, the current administration has worked tirelessly to impede Congress' oversight responsibilities at ICE Detention Facilities, including Delaney Hall.<sup>3</sup> The impediments have come in various forms including denying

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/119/crec/2026/01/22/172/15/CREC-2026-01-22-bk2.pdf> at page 339

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2026/04/17/nx-s1-5789092/deaths-of-migrants-in-ice-custody-hit-record-high-under-trump>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aila.org/library/ice-issues-memo-restricting-congressional-visits-to-detention-facilities>

Members of Congress entry into facilities, implementing onerous notification and paperwork requirements, limiting Member access to detainees, restricting detainee access to congressionally provided privacy release forms which are necessary for Members of Congress to process constituent casework, using aggressive tactics including arresting, levying unprecedented charges, and pepper spraying lawmakers, and more. ICE has tried to maneuver around court orders to continue to enforce barriers to oversight for Members of Congress.<sup>4</sup> As a former Senator, Secretary Mullin, we expect that you more than most understand the importance of Congressional oversight. Further, we'd hoped that your leadership would not carry the same disregard for the law as your predecessor's.

In the face of a limited and challenging oversight environment, it is no coincidence that 2025 was one of the deadliest years at ICE detention facilities and deaths in custody this year are set to outpace what we saw in 2025, including a spike in suicide deaths among ICE detainees.<sup>5</sup> The conditions that exist at Delaney Hall and other detention facilities make unimpeded congressional oversight a matter of urgency and unprecedented importance. We implore you to rescind the current congressional visitation policies at ICE and Delaney Hall that impede congressional oversight and to instead implement policies that promote transparency at the agency so that it may be held accountable to the Americans whose tax dollars fund it.

### **Conditions at Delaney Hall Detention Facility are Inhumane and Misaligned with ICE's Own Standards**

The rise in tension at Delaney Hall facility over the Memorial Day weekend was not mere coincidence. Months of unaddressed grievances by detainees and their loved ones made their protests inevitable. Moreover, as elected officials we have sent multiple inquiries to both ICE and GEO Group, publicly and privately, raising concerns about the conditions at Delaney Hall facility and calling for them to be addressed – all to no avail.

Among our concerns have been reports about security breaches, limited access to medical care, overcrowding, impediments to detainee access to legal counsel, the slow pace of adjudication in immigration courts, unsanitary conditions, the poor quality of food provided to detainees, treatment of, and medical care provided to, pregnant women, and minimal space and opportunity for familial visits. Our inquiries have been informed by the conditions we have witnessed during various oversight visits and immense public reporting on conditions at the facility. In addition, we spoke to detainees and heard their experiences. Their concerns are also well documented through multiple public letters that outline grievances around the quality of food, a lack of due process, and other poor conditions.<sup>6 7</sup>

In the nearly year and a half that Delaney Hall has operated under the Trump Administration, four detainees have escaped following a deterioration in conditions<sup>8</sup>, a detainee (Jean Wilson-Brutus) has died in custody<sup>9</sup>, and the poor living conditions at the facility have fueled justifiable

---

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2026-01/26\\_0108\\_sec\\_congressional-access-alien-detention-facilities-access-policy-and-use-appropriations-for-enforcement.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2026-01/26_0108_sec_congressional-access-alien-detention-facilities-access-policy-and-use-appropriations-for-enforcement.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2026/05/27/ice-suicide-deaths-detention-custody-takeaways/d789b4e4-5981-11f1-8a9d-afb1148204e1\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/2026/05/27/ice-suicide-deaths-detention-custody-takeaways/d789b4e4-5981-11f1-8a9d-afb1148204e1_story.html)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.lahuelga.com/elgrito>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.lahuelga.com/sos>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/14/nyregion/newark-ice-detainees-escape.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/reports/ddrJeanWilsonBrutus.pdf>

outrage from detainees, advocates, and elected officials. Detainees have resorted to hunger and work strikes as a means of bringing awareness to the conditions they experience on a daily basis.<sup>10</sup>

Instead of addressing the well-documented concerns about the conditions at Delaney Hall, ICE officials have greeted advocates, protestors, and at times Members of Congress with armored vehicles, pepper spray, and contempt. Tensions at Delaney Hall will continue to escalate because ICE and GEO Group have refused to take meaningful action to address the abhorrent conditions at the facility that are foundational to our call for its closure. The facility has become a hazard to the broader New Jersey community and a wound to the democratic principles of our nation and work.

### **ICE's Use of Escalatory and Retaliatory Tactics in Response to Protest is Unjustifiable**

As this letter was being written, our offices received multiple reports on extreme retaliatory tactics being deployed by ICE agents against detainees and protestors at the Delaney Hall Detention Facility. We have gotten news of detainees being beaten with batons, tear gas being deployed, and alarming accounts of unrest and violence. These reports are abhorrent and we condemn all escalatory actions and use of force taken by ICE agents against detainees and advocates peacefully exercising their First Amendment rights. We expect an immediate and thorough report on the use of force against protestors and detainees at Delaney Hall facility. Our urgency and alarm is not unwarranted as "Border Czar" Tom Homan has publicly stated that he would deploy tactics such as force-feeding detainees should the situation at Delaney escalate further.<sup>11</sup> This response is callous and dismissive of the conditions that led to the hunger strike in the first place. Agents who engage in deploying use of force or inhumane tactics against detainees or non-violent protestors must immediately be held accountable.

Last week, a letter penned by some 300 detainees at Delaney was released to the public. In this letter detainees outlined the abhorrent conditions they've endured. Among other things, detainees described themselves as being "tortured physically and psychologically" at Delaney Hall due to poor food resources, the high spread of disease, and a deep sense of helplessness and frustration. In response to these conditions, detainees began a hunger and labor strike to bring awareness to the detrimental conditions and treatment they are facing.<sup>12 13</sup>

Instead of improving conditions, GEO Group and ICE have responded to the grievances of detainees, their loved ones, advocates, and elected officials by engaging in retaliatory tactics. Outside the facility these tactics have looked like the use of pepper spray on protestors, physical assault, and deliberately escalatory intimidation by agents dressed in tactical gear and driving armored vehicles. Inside the facility, retaliation has taken the form of rapidly transferring detainees out of the facility with no regard to the impact the transfer may have on the detainee's family or access to legal counsel, withholding commissary purchases, suspending visitation and

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://time.com/article/2026/05/26/delaney-hall-ice-protests-new-jersey-dhs-geo-group-hunger-strike/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5896793-tom-homan-trump-admin-immigration-enforcement-detainees-hunger-strike/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.lahuelga.com/sos>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/expired-food-neglected-medical-care-hunger-strike-allegations-fuel-pro-rcna346874>

the use of electronic tablets used to communicate with loved ones, and verbal threats. These actions by ICE and GEO Group have only proven to escalate tensions at Delaney Hall resulting in the injury and unwarranted arrest of advocates. Even Members of Congress have not been immune from the brutality and contempt of ICE agents with some Members having been pepper sprayed and in other scenarios tackled to the ground. Further, the actions of ICE agents at Delaney have sown seeds of distrust and confusion in New Jersey communities among the families of those detained at Delaney Hall about the well-being and safety of their loved ones.

### **The Lack of Due Process in Immigration Proceedings Has Contributed Significantly to the Issues at Delaney Hall and Detention Centers Across the Country**

The current administration has gone through a painstaking process to make legal immigration more difficult for the millions of people who have invested in the American Dream. By stripping away status from millions of people who entered the country legally, the administration has subsequently made more people eligible for arrest and detention. This exacerbation is what has allowed facilities like Delaney Hall to reach near capacity, creating an atmosphere of unrest and tension. It has also contributed significantly to an immense backlog in our immigration courts, leaving millions of people detained for months without the opportunity to come before a judge within a reasonable time.

Most of the detainees at Delaney Hall and elsewhere are non-violent and have no criminal convictions. They have families in the U.S., served as a meaningful part of their churches and communities, and have contributed to the economy. The “arrest first, ask questions later” approach that ICE has implemented has resulted in crowded detention facilities with long periods of detention for those who wait to have their day in court. It has meant that individuals who positively contribute to American communities through their work, church, or family have been forced to sit idle for months before they can have their case heard before an immigration judge. This is a clear violation of due process principles that are a cornerstone of our democracy.

Meanwhile, this administration has continued to promote self-deportation while those who wish to do so are stuck waiting inside of Delaney Hall and other facilities for months, if not longer. In a third letter issued by detainees at Delaney Hall, they issued a call for greater efficiency in their judicial proceedings stating, “we believe it is unjust to keep people who wish to leave of their own free will in custody...”. We agree. For those who have lost faith in the American Dream and wish to return to their country of origin, there is no logical reason to hold them at Delaney Hall or any other facility, particularly when their release poses no national security concerns.

### **GEO Group’s Management of Delaney Hall Detention Facility is Representative of Deep Conflicts of Interest and Ethics Issues at ICE**

We have serious concerns about the influence current and former GEO Group officials have under the current administration. Unfortunately, ICE has neglected to hold GEO Group accountable for its shortcomings and instead has chosen to pour millions of dollars into the company by continuing their contract, which GEO Group valued at \$1 billion for the operation of Delaney Hall.<sup>14</sup> To date, ICE has paid GEO Group more than \$40 million for its Delaney Hall operations and is obligated to pay at least an additional \$21 million. Thus, for the operation of

---

<sup>14</sup> <https://investors.geogroup.com/news-releases/news-release-details/geo-group-awarded-15-year-contract-us-immigration-and-customs>

Delaney Hall from March 2025 to present, more than \$60 million American tax dollars will land in the pockets of GEO Group for its Delaney Hall operation. Despite the exorbitant cost of running the Delaney Hall facility, ICE has taken minimal actions to hold GEO Group accountable, and ICE continues to let the company put profits over people.

The unfortunate truth is that the Trump Administration continues to push a mass deportation agenda that is steeped in inhumane and poorly considered policies. The culmination of issues at Delaney Hall facility is the natural result. The administration has prioritized the wealth of ICE contractors such as GEO Group at the expense of American communities. The company's former executive, David Venturella, is set to lead ICE as Acting Director despite clear conflicts of interest.<sup>15</sup> Venturella's placement in this role is aligned with a pattern of minimal enforcement of ethics standards under the Trump Administration particularly in the space of immigration detention.<sup>16</sup> Secretary Mullin, as the head of DHS you are well positioned to change the Department and its components in a manner that best suits the needs of the American people. We urge you to work with Congress to push forward real reforms that will restore trust between your agency and the American public.

### **Requests and Inquiries**

As conditions at Delaney Hall continue to deteriorate, we ask that you take immediate action on the following items:

#### *Secretary Mullin*

- Immediately condemn and cease the deployment of use of force tactics by ICE agents at Delaney Hall facility.
- Rescind the current congressional visitation policies at ICE and Delaney Hall that impede congressional oversight and instead implement policies that promote transparency. This includes, but is not limited to, rescinding any policy that requires Members of Congress to provide advance notice before visiting a detention facility.
- Implement a clear and easy process to ensure all detainees can benefit from access to legal counsel and visitation from their loved ones.
- Ensure every library at every detention facility has copies of the privacy release form for the offices of their respective Members of Congress and provide detainees with reasonable accommodation to submit those forms.
- Require GEO Group to operate the Delaney Hall facility in a manner consistent with current law and the U.S. Constitution or take immediate steps to close the facility.
- Prohibit GEO Group, other contractors, and DHS agents including ICE agents, from taking escalatory measures against detainees, advocates, protestors, and elected officials who are peacefully exercising their First Amendment rights.
- Share the unredacted contract for Delaney Hall facility with Members of Congress pursuant to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) section 5.403 which states, "*Contracting officers shall give Members of Congress, upon their request, detailed*

---

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2026/05/12/g-s1-121766/ice-acting-director-venturella>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/09/21/trump-administration-bribery-probe-homan/>

*information regarding any particular contract. When responsiveness would result in disclosure of classified matter, business confidential information, or information prejudicial to competitive acquisition, the contracting officer shall refer the proposed reply, with full documentation, to the agency head and inform the legislative liaison office of the action.”* Our request for this information dates as far back as **December 2025** and despite numerous attempts, remains unanswered.

- Reassess the financial needs of detention oversight offices at the Department including ODO, OIDO, and CRCL, and submit a revised budget request to Congress reflective of the funding needed to allow these offices to conduct thorough and comprehensive oversight of detention facilities **before** budget reconciliation legislation and appropriations legislation funding for DHS is considered.
- Rescind DHS policies that do not afford agents the discretion to forgo arresting individuals in light of humane considerations such as their parental status or health.

*Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche*

- Take immediate action to prioritize due process and grant those detained at Delaney Hall an opportunity to raise their case in the appropriate forum and benefit from the relief for which they are eligible under the law.
- Immediately allow those seeking voluntary departure, who pose no national security or community threat, the opportunity to be released from detention and have their request heard and decided by a judge.
- End the politicization of immigration judges at the Department of Justice and rehire those judges who were fired without cause.
- End the use of military attorneys as immigration judges.
- Submit to Congress a detailed plan outlining how your Department will hire additional immigration judges and ease the backlog of cases that currently exist. This plan must include a revised budget request reflective of the funding the Department will need to hire qualified immigration judges and supporting staff.

In addition to our stated requests, we ask that you provide us with answers no later than **30 days** after receipt of this letter to the following questions:

*Secretary Mullin*

- What disciplinary measures will you implement on ICE agents who have deployed use of force tactics against non-violent protestors and detainees at Delaney Hall?
- Will you commit to providing Members of Congress access to detention facilities during unannounced visits as required by law?
- Detainees at Delaney Hall Detention Facility have now issued three open letters collectively contesting the basis for their detention and the continued lack of due process despite complying with the legal requirements of their pending claims. Can you provide any reasons for the continued detention of individuals whose immigration violations amount to civil infractions? You may consult with Acting Attorney General Blanche in response to this question.

- In response to the open letters and attempted visits by state congressional members to Delaney Hall Detention Facility, ICE has retaliated by transferring detainees who have participated in the ongoing work and hunger strike. ICE has also arrested multiple protestors and dragged them into Delaney. Please provide details on:
  - The basis for transferring detained persons participating in the hunger and labor strike.
  - The number of U.S. citizens and protestors that have been arrested at Delaney Hall.
  - The procedures currently in place at ICE or DHS that justify these transfers and arrests.
  - A detailed explanation on your plans to de-escalate tensions at Delaney Hall facility and improve the conditions of the facility or prepare the facility for closure.
- Please provide an explanation for how DHS evaluates GEO Group's contract performance in operating the Delaney Hall facility.

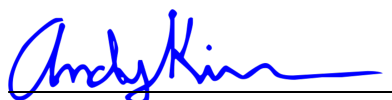
*Acting Attorney General Blanche*

- Will you share with us the active steps you are taking to decrease the immense backlog in our immigration courts and ensure due process for detained individuals?
- What metrics will your Department use to assess the qualifications and performance of immigration judges or military attorneys serving as immigration judges?
- Can you account for reports of prolonged delays for those detainees who have chosen to voluntarily depart the country?
  - On average, what is the length of time between a detainee's request to depart the country and their actual removal?

**Conclusion**

We are confident that a failure to address the real and systemic issues in our immigration system and at Delaney Hall Detention Facility will only lead to more pain, outrage, and distrust between the American people and the agencies you lead. As Congress prepares to consider legislation that would further fund ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at unprecedented levels, we must grapple with and address the deep and systemic issues at detention facilities such as Delaney Hall. As Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and Attorney General of the Department of Justice, you are uniquely situated to redress the issues we have raised. If the Delaney Hall Detention Facility cannot be operated in a manner consistent with current law and our Constitution, it should not continue to exist and its operator, GEO Group, should not continue to profit from federal dollars. We urge you to address these issues or to take immediate action to close the facility.

Sincerely,



Andy Kim  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



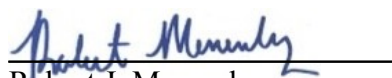
Nellie Pou  
Member of Congress



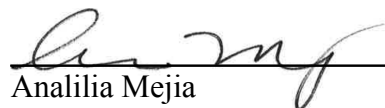
Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



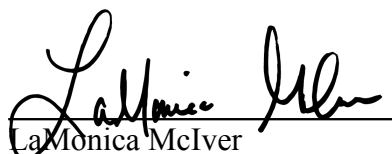
Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez  
Member of Congress



Analilia Mejia  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress