

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 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 Lyons
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20536

The Honorable Rodney Scott
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Secretary Noem, Acting Director Lyons, and Commissioner Scott,

We write regarding the surge in hiring of thousands of new Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers by the end of 2025. Given the magnitude and pace of this expansion of federal law enforcement forces, we are seeking information on the hiring standards and training protocols in place to ensure that this rapid expansion does not compromise the integrity, professionalism, or readiness of the federal immigration law enforcement workforce. Of particular concern is the potential deployment of inadequately trained or insufficiently vetted enforcement officers in cities across the country.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) bears full responsibility for ensuring that every individual placed in a position of federal authority has undergone thorough vetting, comprehensive training, and is subject to robust oversight. The authority to detain and use force, including, in extreme circumstances, deadly force, is not a game, and it is not a performance.¹

¹ DHS has engaged in unprofessional and at times juvenile recruitment tactics. On the social media platform X, the Department published advertisements with slogans such as, “Want to deport illegals with your absolute boys?” and “Serve your country! Defend your culture! No undergraduate degree required!” It also awarded an immediate, no-bid contract worth more than \$120,000 to a Maryland Ford dealership to purchase two new Ford Mustang GT vehicles to entice people to work for ICE: @DHSgov, “Think about how many criminal illegal aliens you could fit in this bad boy!” X, (Aug. 5, 2025), 3:05 p.m., <https://x.com/DHSgov/status/1952853433113035181>; @DHSgov, “Serve your country! Defend your culture! No undergraduate degree required!”, X, (Aug. 5, 2025), 6:08 a.m., <https://x.com/DHSgov/status/1952718231455592667>; Jamie LaReau, *Ford Mustangs Chosen by White House to Boost ICE Agent Recruitment*, USA Today, (Aug 24, 2025); <https://www.usatoday.com/story/cars/news/2025/08/24/white-house-ford-mustang-gt/85808876007/>. Moreover, President Trump has signaled his support for aggressive tactics used by ICE agents during immigration raids. When asked by an interviewer whether the violent raids had gone too far, Trump responded that they “haven't gone far

Deploying personnel who lack the qualifications and training long required of federal officers all but guarantees breaches of constitutional, statutory, and regulatory obligations, threatens public safety and civil rights, endangers officers, risks repeating historical abuses of federal power, and undermines the legitimacy of law enforcement and democracy.

For decades, federal law enforcement officers have been held to the highest eligibility standards, often exceeding those of state and local agencies, and have undergone a stringent vetting process. Once hired, they have received extensive training to ensure they meet baseline performance standards required for law enforcement. By all accounts, since the beginning of this year, DHS, ICE, and CBP have dropped the eligibility criteria and training requirements to dangerously low levels, creating the potential for a poorly trained force consisting of thousands of new officers, deployed in communities across America, with the legal authority to use deadly force. Last month, reports indicated that more than 200 newly hired recruits were dismissed after failing to meet ICE's own hiring requirements.² Many of the issues surfaced during training only after the recruits admitted during training that they had not been fingerprinted or drug tested, raising the alarming possibility that individuals who did not disclose such lapses may already be on the job.³ This amounts to government malpractice that endangers public safety.

Since January, the Administration has significantly expanded ICE and CBP operations, deploying officers to communities nationwide to locate and deport noncitizens. More than 70 percent of detained noncitizens have no criminal record,⁴ and many were actively engaged in the process to legalize their status. ICE and CBP personnel have been further supplemented by agents diverted from other federal agencies that do not conduct immigration enforcement. However, the Administration's quota of 3,000 arrests per day – in addition to fueling indiscriminate arrests of immigrants – has created a demand for thousands more officers.⁵ To fulfill this "mission," ICE has received \$170.1 billion for immigration enforcement and the hiring of 10,000 officers under the Republican spending bill deceptively titled the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," making it the highest funded federal law enforcement agency in history. This infusion of funds has seemingly triggered a hiring frenzy that raises serious concerns about DHS's recruitment standards and training protocols. In August, Secretary Noem announced that ICE planned to end all age restrictions by changing the minimum age for ICE agents from 21 years old to just 18 years old, a move widely criticized as reckless and politically motivated.⁶

enough." Norah O'Donnell et. al., *Trump Pressed on Government Shutdown, Nuclear Weapons Testing, ICE Raids and More*, CBS NEWS, (Nov. 2, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-60-minutes-interview-highlights/?intcid=CNR-01-0623>.

² Julia Ainsley & Didi Martinez, *Some New ICE Recruits Have Shown up to Training Without Full Vetting*, NBC News, (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/new-ice-recruits-showed-training-full-vetting-rcna238739>

³ *Id.*

⁴ TRAC Immigration, *Immigration Detention Quick Facts*, (Sep. 21, 2025), <https://tracreports.org/immigration/quickfacts/#:~:text=42%2C755%20out%20of%2059%2C762%2E%80%94or%2071.5%25%20held%20in,committed%20only%20minor%20offenses%2C%20including%20traffic%20violations>.

⁵ Brittany Gibson & Steff Kight, *Scoop: Stephen Miller, Noem Tell ICE to Supercharge Immigrant Arrests*, AXIOS, (May 28, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/28/immigration-ice-deportations-stephen-miller>.

⁶ Dep't. of Homeland Sec., *Secretary Noem Unveils No Age Limit for Patriotic Americans to Join ICE Law Enforcement to Help Remove Worst of the Worst from U.S.*, (Aug. 6, 2025), <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/08/06/secretary-noem-unveils-no-age-limit-patriotic-americans-join-ice-law-enforcement>.

In addition to lowering hiring standards, public reports of misconduct among current officers call into question the Department's ability to adequately train thousands of new hires on an accelerated timeline. American citizens and noncitizens alike are already experiencing the consequences of DHS's undermining of accountability and failure to maintain even basic professional standards. In September, an ICE officer violently threw a woman to the ground at a New York immigration court. Although he was placed on administrative leave pending investigation, he was back in the field within days and faced no disciplinary action.⁷ Just weeks later, ICE officers grabbed and shoved journalists reporting from a hallway outside a New York City immigration court, hospitalizing one of the journalists.⁸ Poor training has also jeopardized federal law enforcement officers. In October, an ICE officer discharged their firearm, injuring two people including a United States Marshal.⁹ These incidents reveal systemic deficiencies that necessitate immediate and comprehensive review and reform to prevent endangering the public. They also raise questions about the effectiveness of supervisory structure, training of supervisors themselves, and the robustness of accountability systems to address misconduct. It is imperative to ensure that officers, particularly those hired under diminishing standards, are not granted unchecked authority to use unnecessary and excessive force or physical aggression.

Rather than prioritizing comprehensive training and effective supervision, the Department reportedly is cutting corners and loosening its training requirements. In August, ICE ended its five-week mandatory in-person Spanish language course in favor of unspecified translation technologies.¹⁰ On August 8, Secretary Noem suggested DHS plans to open new training centers in cities across the country to meet the demand created by the unprecedented influx of new recruits that cannot, despite DHS's claims to the contrary, be met by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.¹¹ ICE leadership has also suggested that the agency is exploring additional ways to streamline training in its rush to deploy new recruits into the field.¹² Alarmingly, while ICE officers previously received nearly five months of training, reports indicate they now receive just 47 days, a number chosen for its symbolic connection to President Trump being the 47th President, not any legitimate law enforcement metric to assess.¹³ This failure to adequately train officers strongly suggests that the Department is demonstrating

⁷ Camilo Montoya-Galvez, *ICE Officer Seen on Video Pushing Woman to Ground has Returned to Duty*, CBS NEWS, (Sep. 29, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ice-officer-pushed-woman-video-returns-to-duty/>.

⁸ Michael Sisak, *Federal Agents Grab and Shove Journalists Outside NYC Immigration Court, Sending one to Hospital*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, (Sep. 30, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/nyc-immigration-journalists-shoving-manchattan-84d95f26278aa406eed37d72ed213452>.

⁹ Josh Campbell & Alex Stambaugh, *US Marshal and Undocumented Immigrant - a Popular TikTok Streamer – Injured in Shooting During ICE Stop in Los Angeles*, CNN, (Oct. 21, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/21/us/los-angeles-immigration-us-marshal-injured>.

¹⁰ Nikita Mazurov, *ICE Removes Spanish-Language Training Requirement for New Recruits*, THE INTERCEPT, (Aug. 14, 2025), <https://theintercept.com/2025/08/14/ice-spanish-language-new-recruits/>.

¹¹ Brian Bennett, *Even With Tons of Money, ICE Finds Obstacles in Hiring 10,000 New Agents*, TIME, (Aug. 12, 2025) <https://time.com/7308862/trump-ice-agent-salary-deportation/>.

¹² Rebecca Santana, *What to Know: Four Ways ICE is Training New Agents and Scaling Up*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, (Aug. 24, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/border-immigration-mass-deportation-ice-trump-2bb1cfbafea8c65d167c0c44ca5d7b43>.

¹³ Nick Miroff, *Fast Times at Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, THE ATLANTIC, (Aug. 26, 2025), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/08/ice-recruitment-immigration-enforcement-billions/684000/>.

deliberate indifference to the rights and safety of the individuals with whom ICE officers interact.

The credibility of ICE and CBP as law enforcement agencies depends on the quality and professionalism of their officers. Strong recruitment standards and rigorous training are essential not only to prepare officers for the challenges of the job but also to foster public confidence in the agency's mission. We urge your agencies to commit to the highest possible standards for all officers, both newly hired and already in the field, and particularly for officer recruitment and training. Accordingly, we request detailed responses to the questions below regarding the Department's vetting, training, and supervision protocols for all newly hired or reassigned personnel within 14 days, so that Congress can assess whether DHS is meeting its constitutional obligations. For each question, please provide information for recruit training and in-service training.

1. What specific changes have been made to the eligibility requirements for new ICE and CBP officers, and what is the rationale for those changes?
2. Have minimum educational or prior law enforcement experience requirements been altered, and if so, how? What is the rationale for those changes?
3. Have drug testing standards been modified, and if so, how? What is the rationale for those changes?
4. Have ICE or CBP changed the social media screening practices for applicants? Do social media screening practices include looking for and excluding applicants who hold any extremist views? Please describe the screening process and factors that may disqualify an applicant.
5. What modifications have been made to the training curriculum, and how do they differ from prior standards? Please specify the topics covered, changes to the training modules, including method of delivery, and the total duration of the training prior to and after the hiring surge.
6. What on-the-job training with a field officer did new recruits receive prior to the hiring surge? Under the hiring surge, do new recruits still receive this training?
7. What training or other resources have replaced the formerly mandatory five-week Spanish language course to ensure effective communication between officers and individuals who speak Spanish?
8. Please describe the existing training program for any ICE contractors who directly interact with detained people. Include details on the topics covered, training modules, including method of delivery, and the total duration of the training.
9. Are there proposals to streamline the training for these contractors? If so, please describe those proposals and provide the rationale for the changes proposed.
10. What specific changes have been made to metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of ICE and CBP officer training, and what is the rationale for these changes?
11. How will you ensure that any recent changes to performance and training metrics do not compromise officer preparedness or public safety?
12. What training do ICE and CBP provide to employees from other federal agencies reassigned to immigration enforcement operations? When are these employees required to complete such training? Include details on the topics covered, training modules, including method of delivery, and the total duration of the training.

13. For each of the following topics, (i) confirm whether officers from other federal law enforcement agencies assigned or reassigned to immigration enforcement receive training related to that topic; (ii) provide the number of hours of required training; and (iii) identify the platform on which these trainings will be delivered (e.g., classroom, scenario-based, virtual):

1. Constitutional law
2. Immigration law
3. Criminal law
4. Investigations
5. Witness interviews
6. Interactions with youth
7. Report writing
8. First aid and safety training
9. Crisis intervention
10. Firearms
11. Use of force
12. Deescalation
13. First amendment protected activity
14. Stops, searches, and arrests
15. Misconduct reporting

This Administration has been actively flaunting an aggressive, militarized approach to immigration enforcement, sending the message that it can use federal force against communities with impunity. At the center of this effort are thousands of officers who appear to lack the professionalism, tactical skill, and judgment required of federal law enforcement, yet have been given broad authority to operate unchecked, while the Department ramps up recruitment and hiring of an unprecedented number of new officers. DHS has a duty to ensure that all officers – both new and currently in service – are properly trained, effectively supervised, and held accountable for their actions. In only months, DHS’s failure to meet its obligations has tarnished the reputation of federal law enforcement, endangered and victimized the public, and eroded public trust in the rule of law. This is unacceptable, and DHS must act swiftly to correct these failures, uphold the rule of law, and respect the Constitutional rights of all people in America.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator