

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland
Security
2002 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland
Security
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Roybal-Allard and Ranking Member Fleischmann:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, we strongly urge you to include language prohibiting the use of funds preventing Members of Congress from entering U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operated or contracted facilities to conduct important oversight to ensure respect of basic human rights. Specifically, it is vital members of Congress are able to do what they can to ensure safe and secure detention environments for staff, detainees, and their surrounding communities.

Since ICE was founded in 2003, the agency operated its detention system under National Detention Standards issued in September 2000.¹ These standards were first revised in 2008 and again in 2011 when ICE adopted their new standards, known as Performance-Based National Detention Standard 2011 (PBNDS 2011).² The PBNDS 2011 includes seven parts: Safety Security, Order, Care, Activities, Justice, and Administration and Management. It is apparent, through multiple reports and investigations, there are a number of standards in both Part 4 – Care and Part 6 – Justice that facilities have continued to not meet. This is especially evident in facilities operated by the GEO Group, Inc. and CoreCivic. Furthermore, communication between ICE and Congress has continued to be subpar, which limits Members of Congress' ability to conduct oversight of detention facilities and monitor compliance with ICE detention standards.

In the first two months of 2019, three ICE detention facilities in Colorado, Texas, and Louisiana quarantined detainees due to mumps outbreaks, grouping both those diagnosed and non-diagnosed detainees together. During previous years, there have been other viral outbreaks, including chicken pox and measles, at facilities around the country. ICE facilities have still not fully implemented or adhered to PBNDS 2011 standards, like standards that would follow Center for Disease Control and Prevention infection disease guidelines. Furthermore, reports have

¹ <https://www.ice.gov/factsheets/facilities-pbnds>

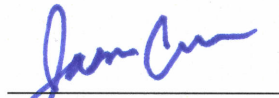
² <https://www.ice.gov/detention-standards/2011>

indicated detainees may have been unable to contact their attorneys or attend court hearings due to quarantine.

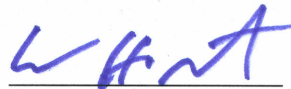
Congress has the right and the responsibility to conduct oversight of all ICE-operated and contracted detention facilities. We therefore urge you to include the following bill language: "None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to prevent a Member of Congress from entering within a 48 hour request, for the purpose of conducting oversight, any facility operated by or for the Department of Homeland Security used to detain or otherwise house aliens, or to make any temporary modification at any such facility that in any way alters what is observed by a visiting Member of Congress, compared to what would be observed in the absence of such modification." Doing so would clarify Congress' role in ensuring detention centers, operated by or for ICE, adhere to the standards ICE has developed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



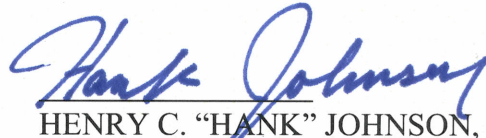
JASON CROW
Member of Congress



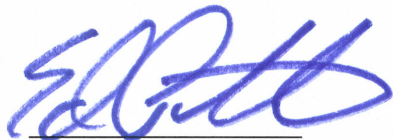
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
Member of Congress



JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress



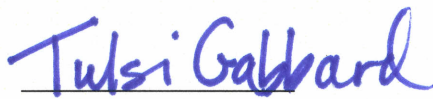
HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.
Member of Congress



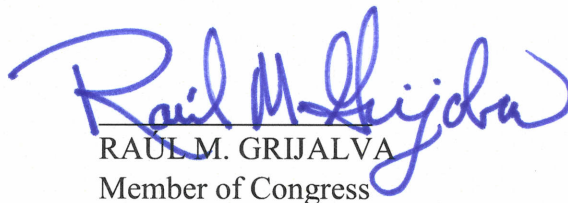
ED PERLMUTTER
Member of Congress



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress



TULSI GABBARD
Member of Congress



RAUL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress



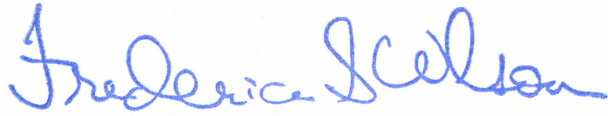
ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress



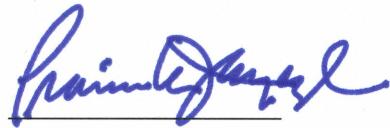
JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress



NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ
Member of Congress



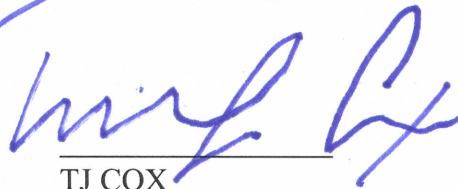
FREDERICA S. WILSON
Member of Congress



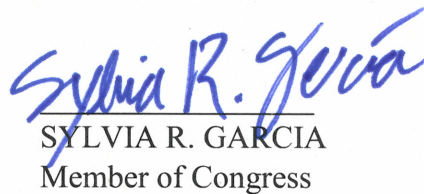
PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Member of Congress



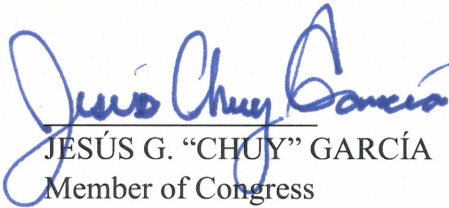
JAMIE RASKIN
Member of Congress



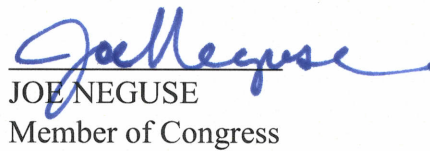
TJ COX
Member of Congress



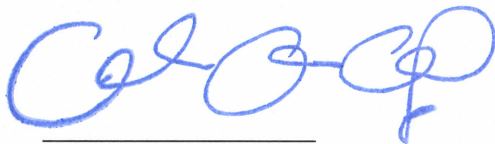
SYLVIA R. GARCIA
Member of Congress



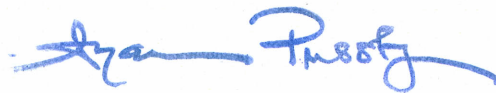
JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA
Member of Congress



JOE NEGUSE
Member of Congress



ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ
Member of Congress



AYANNA PRESSLEY
Member of Congress