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U.S. SENATOR FOR GEORGIA

MEDICAL NEGLECT & DENIAL OF ADEQUATE FOOD OR WATER IN U.S. IMMIGRATION DETENTION

U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff is continuing his investigation into human rights abuses in U.S. immigration detention. This second report focuses on 85 credible reports of medical neglect, including cases that reportedly led to life-threatening injuries and complications, and 82 credible reports of denial of adequate food or water, including cases that reportedly led to malnutrition or dehydration.

Prepared by Senator Jon Ossoff

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I. Executive Summary

U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff is continuing his investigation into human rights abuses in U.S. immigration detention. On August 5, 2025, Senator Ossoff released an initial report focused on the mistreatment of pregnant women and children.¹ This second report focuses on 85 credible reports of medical neglect, including cases that reportedly led to life-threatening injuries and complications, and 82 credible reports of denial of adequate food or water, including cases that reportedly led to malnutrition or dehydration.

As detailed in Section III, these credible reports include cases that reportedly led to a heart attack after days of untreated chest pain, complications from untreated diabetes, denial of necessary medications and associated complications, potential exposure to mosquito-borne illness without prophylactic treatment for malaria, denial of bottled water for baby formula, vermin infestation, and animal feces in food. Most credible reports of medical neglect and denial of adequate food or water originated at facilities in Florida (45 credible reports), Texas (26 credible reports), and Georgia (22 credible reports).

Between January 20 and August 5, 2025, the Senator's office received or identified 510 credible reports of human rights abuses against detainees, including those described in this and the office's prior publication. These reports involve detainees held in Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and Health and Human Services (HHS) facilities, county jails, and federal buildings across 25 U.S. states and Puerto Rico, at U.S. military bases (including Guantánamo Bay in Cuba and Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti), and on chartered deportation flights.

¹ Senator Jon Ossoff, The Abuse of Pregnant Women & Children in U.S. Immigration Detention (Aug. 5, 2025), https://www.ossoff.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/250721_Pregnancy_Report_v7.pdf.

Report

II. Background

In January 2025, U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff launched an investigation into human rights abuses in U.S. immigration detention. The Senator's staff has interviewed and received credible reports of abuse from dozens of witnesses and sources, including correctional staff, law enforcement officials, attorneys, detainees and their family members, doctors, and nurses; conducted site inspections of DHS-, HHS-, and BOP-administrated facilities; and analyzed public reports and court records. Additionally, from January through August the Senator's staff interviewed 46 detainees, including during site inspections at El Paso Service Processing Center and South Texas Family Residential Center ("Dilley") in Texas and at Stewart Detention Center and FCI Atlanta in Georgia. The Senator's staff also inspected the South Texas Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Processing Center and Compass Connections San Antonio Shelter for unaccompanied children.

Obstruction of Congressional oversight by the Department of Homeland Security, including temporarily denying access to a facility based on arbitrary changes in notice requirements, has been an impediment to oversight.

Over the course of this seven-month investigation, Senator Ossoff has led nine oversight letters to federal agencies including DHS, the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Defense (DoD), demanding further information about immigration detention at Guantánamo Bay and in federal prisons, threats by the Administration to lower Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention standards, the reestablishment of family detention, and related topics. To date, the administration has neglected to respond to five of these Congressional oversight letters. The Senator continues to investigate DHS operations to ensure transparency and to prevent human rights abuses in U.S. government custody.

Between January 20 and August 5, 2025, the Senator's office received or identified 510 credible reports of human rights abuses against detainees, including those described in this and the office's prior publication. This is an active and ongoing investigation. The Senator's staff acknowledges that the credible reports received or identified are not exhaustive and, as part of this ongoing investigation, staff will continue to analyze public reports and records, to interview detainees, attorneys, and experts, and to conduct site inspections.

III. New Findings

Of the 510 credible reports received or identified between January and August this year, the Senator's staff received or identified 85 credible reports of medical neglect and 82 credible reports of denial of adequate food or water.

A. REPORTED ABUSES

Medical Neglect: Between January 20 and August 5, the Senator's staff received or identified 85 credible reports concerning medical neglect of detainees, including reports of delayed or denied medical care, even in urgent circumstances, and reported failures by facility staff to administer critical medication, including detainees' own prescription medication. In some of these cases, detainees reportedly suffered life-threatening injuries and complications.

Such reports include:

- A U.S. government official working at a U.S. government site where detainees are reportedly being held reported to the Senator's staff that "ambulances have to come almost every day" and that detainees are "passing out." The official further reported that the lack of medical care available at the site leaves detainees sick with undiagnosed, untreated, and potentially transmissible illness, stating their view that such illness might include "COVID-19 and tuberculosis, we don't know."
- A detainee reportedly complained "for days" to facility staff of severe chest pain.² Those complaints were reportedly unaddressed and after which the detainee reportedly suffered a "massive heart attack."³
- A diabetic detainee, who required constant glucose monitoring and treatment, was reportedly not given insulin or other medication for two days while being held in ICE custody. The detainee reportedly became delirious and later had to be placed under medical observation for "uncontrolled diabetes."⁴
- Multiple attorneys with clients at multiple facilities reported that their clients were denied

² Daysi Calavia-Robertson, After deaths at ICE detention centers, this N.J. woman fears her dad will be next, NJ.com (Apr. 3, 2025), <https://www.nj.com/union/2025/04/man-has-a-heart-attack-in-ice-center-after-being-detained-at-a-routine-appt-calavia-robertson.html>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Tanvi Misra, "Essentially Cages": ICE is Using Courthouse Cells for Lengthy Detentions, The Nation (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/ice-detention-courthouse-holding-room/>

access to prescribed asthma inhalers and allergy medications, risking acute respiratory distress or severe allergic reactions.

- Detainees who were transferred to Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti were reportedly not provided with anti-malarial medication despite known risk of malaria infection.⁵
- A detainee reported severe gastrointestinal distress while in ICE detention and a two-week delay to get a medical appointment whereupon the detainee was given a painkiller. The detainee reported suffering from severe gastrointestinal distress for five months, while repeatedly requesting medical appointments, before receiving an appropriate prescription.

Denial of Adequate Food or Water: Between January 20 and August 5, the Senator’s staff received or identified 82 credible reports of detainees being denied adequate food or water while in custody, reportedly leading to malnutrition and dehydration. Multiple detainees reported prolonged periods between meals and insufficient or rotten food. In some cases, detainees reported significant weight loss and contaminated food or water leading to diarrhea and dehydration.

Such reports include:

- One detainee reported being fed nothing for 36 hours.⁶ To receive potable water, the detainee and their cellmates reportedly had to “bang on the window to be given a paper cone of water from a jug in the hallway.”⁷
- Detainees at one facility reported foul odor, taste, and color of water. At that location, facility staff reportedly told a detainee to use such water for formula for a detainee’s baby, who reportedly then suffered diarrhea, and that bottled water for the purpose of baby formula was requested but denied.
- A detainee reported that, due to a water shortage at a facility, adults are “fighting” children for access to water.⁸
- At a facility where multiple detainees reported hunger, a detained pregnant woman

5 Camilo Montaya-Galvez, Eleanor Watson & Jacob Rosen, ICE official details risks for staff and detainees in Djibouti, including malaria and potential rocket attacks, CBS News (Jun. 5, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ice-detainees-djibouti-south-sudan/>.

6 Valarie Gonzalez, New insight into Texas family detention reveals adults fighting kids for clean water, AP (Jun. 21, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/migrants-child-supervision-texas-c4994b2b6786717ea79a4bc230e476bf>.

7 Laura Villagran, Immigrant women describe ‘hell on earth’ in ICE detention, USA Today (Mar. 23, 2025), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/03/23/immigrant-women-hell-on-earth-trump-ice-detention/82029368007/>.

8 Gonzalez, *supra* n.5.

reported receiving only “a small cookie” at breakfast each day and feeling “hungry all the time.”

- A detainee reported that while detained, their daily meal consisted of “a very small portion, probably less than 3 oz” of food “paste” made from beans and vegetables that had “a musty smell.”⁹
- A detainee reported that, while detained at Guantánamo Bay, they lost substantial weight in just two weeks due to malnutrition.¹⁰
- Detainees reported that, while being housed at a facility reportedly affected by a rat infestation, they often found rat feces in their food.¹¹
- A detainee reported that, at one facility, “[e]very day is a disaster with the food here.” Small cartons of milk at breakfast are reportedly expired, and dinners are reportedly not served until 11:00 p.m.¹²

9 Yiqing Wang, He wanted to record a TikTok, but ended up in immigration detention, Voice of San Diego (Jun. 17, 2025), <https://voiceofsandiego.org/2025/06/17/he-wanted-to-record-a-tiktok-but-ended-up-in-immigration-detention/>.

10 Claire Healy & Syra Ortiz Blanes, ‘Give us back our sons’: A look at the Venezuelan migrants Trump sent to Guantanamo, Miami Herald (Apr. 27, 2025), https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article300729484.html?taid=67beef-8a0701c10001473441&utm_campaign=trueanthem&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.

11 Anna Kaminski, Immigrants detained in Leavenworth federal prison live in squalor without sunlight, letter claims, Buter County Times-Gazette (Jun. 9, 2025), <https://www.butlercountytimesgazette.com/2025/06/immigrants-detained-in-leavenworth-federal-prison-live-in-squalor-without-sunlight-letters-claim/>.

12 Luis Ferré-Sadurní, Tracey Tully & Mark Bonamo, Four men escape from migrant detention facility in Newark, New York Times (Jun. 12, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/12/nyregion/newark-migrant-detention-center-disturbance.html>.

B. REPORTED LOCATIONS OF ABUSES

Between January 20 and August 5, 2025, staff received or identified credible reports of medical neglect and denial of adequate food or water held in facilities in 20 U.S. states and on U.S. military bases, including Guantánamo Bay in Cuba and Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, and on chartered deportation flights. Figure 2 below shows how many reports the Senator’s staff received or identified within each state. “Other” denotes credible reports occurring on U.S. military bases and on chartered deportation flights.

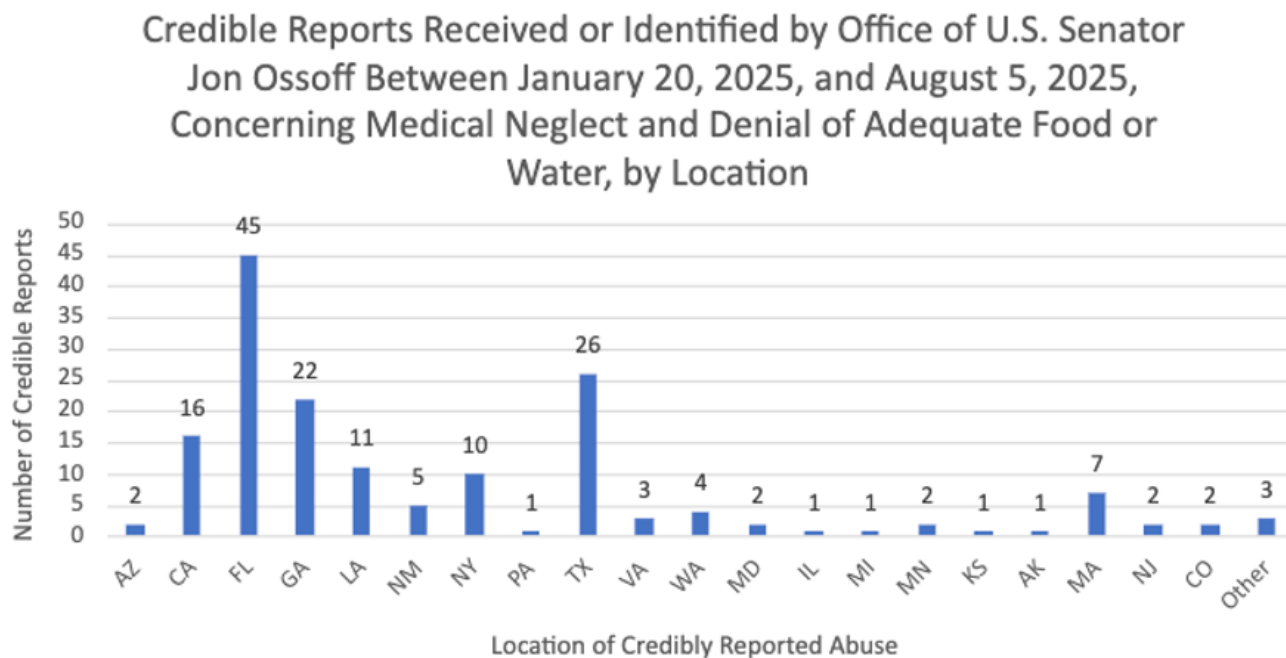


Figure 1

Most credible reports of medical neglect and denial of adequate food or water reportedly originate at facilities in Florida (45 credible reports), Texas (26 credible reports), and Georgia (22 credible reports).

C. REPORTED FACILITY ADMINISTRATORS

Between January 20 and August 5, 2025, staff received or identified credible reports of medical neglect and denial of adequate food or water among detainees held in DHS (ICE and CBP) and BOP facilities and on U.S. military bases administered by DoD. Figure 2 below shows how many credible reports staff received or identified, by facility administrator.

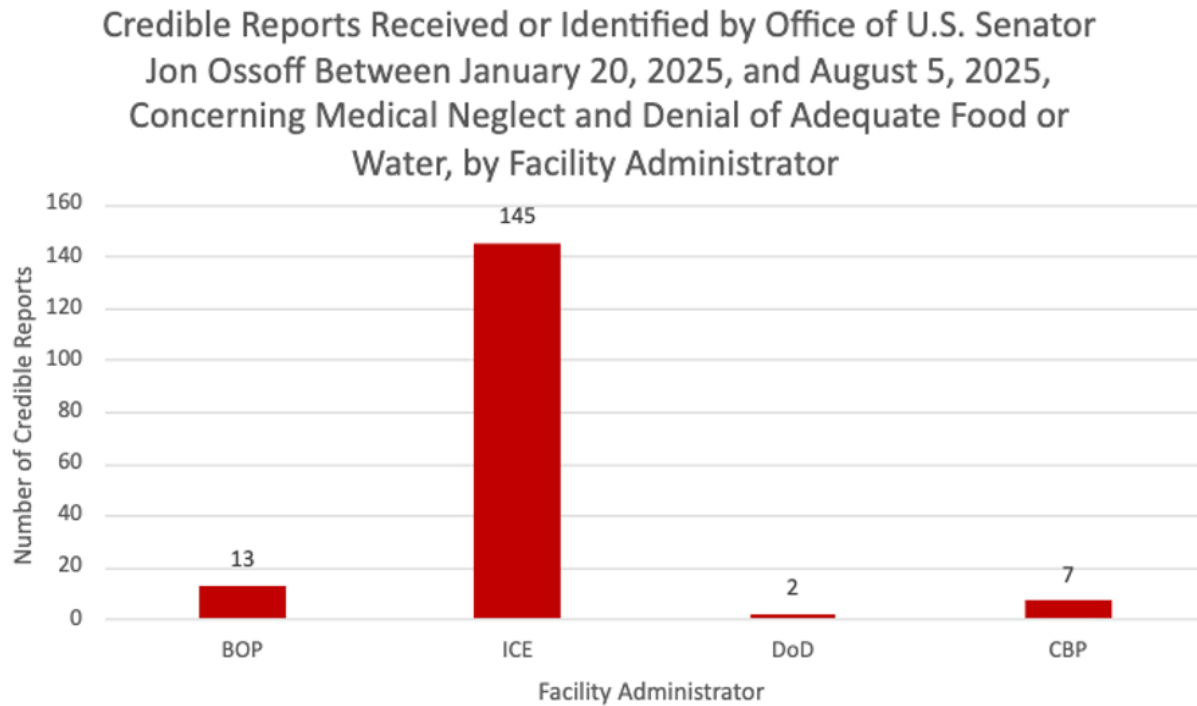


Figure 2