

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 5, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear President Trump, Secretary Noem, and Attorney General Bondi:

We write to express profound alarm at your administration's decision to strip federal law enforcement agencies of thousands of personnel that keep Americans safe and redeploy them to arrest, detain, and deport immigrants. The fact that the majority of those arrested have no criminal background confirms that this mass diversion is not grounded in threat assessments, operational necessity, or any coherent security strategy.¹ You have pulled agents away from some of the federal government's most critical criminal investigations, weakening the very work that ensures public safety. In a world in which we must prioritize the use of limited resources, an agent arresting primarily non-violent immigrants necessarily means one less agent available to catch child predators and drug traffickers. This diversion represents a deliberate choice: a stunning abdication of the basic responsibilities of the executive branch to the American people, and a direct threat to the security of communities across the country.

Your administration has reassigned agents from across the federal government to fuel a politically motivated deportation agenda that bears little relationship to actual security or safety priorities. These agencies range from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Marshals Service, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and Department of Defense to the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), Internal Revenue Service, Department of State, U.S. Secret Service, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Department of Energy, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and Customs

¹ Albert Sun, "Most Immigrants Arrested in City Crackdowns Have No Criminal Record," *New York Times*, Dec. 4, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/12/04/us/ice-arrests-criminal-records-data.html>.

and Border Protection (CBP).² Agents have been pulled off complex cases mid-investigation—cases involving child exploitation, drug trafficking, sanctions evasion, cyberattacks, domestic extremism, and foreign adversary activity³—allowing dangerous criminals to roam free on our streets.

The effects are especially devastating at HSI—an agency the U.S. relies on to combat child exploitation, dismantle human trafficking networks, stop fentanyl pipelines, and combat cartels and other criminal organizations. Over the past decade, HSI has rescued nearly 10,000 children from exploitation, abuse, and trafficking, including through its Cyber Crimes Center, Child Exploitation Investigations Unit.⁴ These rescues rely on highly specialized agents, forensic interviewers, digital-evidence teams, and long-term partnerships with state, local, and international law enforcement entities. Yet, entire HSI units have reportedly been reassigned en masse to immigration enforcement, primarily sweeping up immigrants who present no security threat to the U.S.⁵ This is not an abstract concern—according to reports of one investigation into a violent sexual child abuse case, the agents working the case were redeployed to immigration enforcement, causing the case to stall.⁶ Each day agents fail to arrest the perpetrator is another day this child must suffer heinous exploitation. In diverting these agents, children who would have been identified and rescued are now left in harm's way.

Compounding these harms, technology companies that submit tens of millions of suspected child abuse files each year have already reported a collapse in follow-up from federal investigators.⁷ Leads are not being pursued, evidence is aging out, and perpetrators are exploiting the vacuum. Meanwhile, HSI personnel themselves have warned that these reassessments are dismantling one of the country's most effective child protection and national security forces. To mitigate the damage, these employees have, at times, tried to advance cases at nights or on weekends to keep them from being abandoned.⁸ Redirecting these investigators to pad deportation statistics is not simply irresponsible—it is a dereliction of duty with life-or-death consequences that puts the safety of our children in jeopardy.

The damage is not limited to HSI but reverberates across the entire federal law enforcement apparatus. At the FBI, nearly one quarter of all agents have been pulled off mission to focus on immigration enforcement—an extraordinary contraction of investigative capacity at a time of

² David Bier, “ICE Has Diverted Over 25,000 Officers from Their Jobs,” CATO Institute, Sept. 3, 2025, <https://www.cato.org/blog/ice-has-diverted-over-25000-officers-their-jobs>.

³ Nicholas Nehamas, Michael H. Keller, et al., “Homeland Security Missions Falter Amid Focus on Deportations,” *New York Times*, Nov. 16, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/16/us/politics/dhs-agents-reassigned.html>.

⁴ “HSI combats child exploitation at home and abroad,” Immigration and Customs Enforcement, <https://www.ice.gov/features/child-exploitation>.

⁵ Sun, “Most Immigrants Arrested in City Crackdowns Have No Criminal Record.”

⁶ Nehamas, Keller, et al., “Homeland Security Missions Falter Amid Focus on Deportations.”

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Josh Meyer, “Thousands of DHS agents shift to deportation instead of drugs, weapons, and human trafficking,” *USA Today*, Feb. 14, 2025, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/02/14/dhs-agents-deportation-not-trafficking/78641666007/>; Brad Heath, Joshua Schneyer, et al., “Exclusive: Thousands of agents diverted to Trump immigration crackdown,” March 22, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/thousands-agents-diverted-trump-immigration-crackdown-2025-03-22/>; Nick Miroff, “Trump Loves ICE. Its Workforce Has Never Been So Miserable,” *The Atlantic*, July 10, 2025, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/07/trump-ice-morale-immigration/683477>; Nehamas, Keller, et al., “Homeland Security Missions Falter Amid Focus on Deportations.”

rising cyber, counterintelligence, and violent crime threats.⁹ At ATF, you have eviscerated firearms trafficking enforcement by reassigning 80 percent of special agents to immigration cases.¹⁰ This has left the agency on pace for a 90 percent decline in dealer-license revocations, its most effective tool for shutting down corrupt gun dealers who funnel weapons into criminal networks.¹¹ No modern administration has ever attempted a reallocation of this scale or recklessness.

The national security implications are dire. According to one report, a major joint FBI-HSI investigation into illicit Iranian oil shipments—a scheme believed to fund designated terrorist organizations—has suffered from the redeployment, to the point where ships and cash have “disappeared” before they could be seized.¹² Moreover, redirection of employees at DHS’ intelligence office has reduced the amount of critical information shared with local law enforcement authorities, impairing their ability to protect Americans from terrorist attacks.¹³ Not only is the administration letting terrorists off the hook, but you are doing so to chase publicity-oriented deportation quotas, separating families and sowing chaos in the process.

The dangerous consequences even extend to America’s cyber and critical infrastructure defenses. CISA specialists who protect hospitals, water systems, pipelines, energy grids, and election infrastructure from foreign cyberattacks have been transferred to support immigration and deportation operations.¹⁴ Days after reports of the redeployment were released, CISA itself issued a directive warning that federal systems are under siege from a nation-state-affiliated cyber threat.¹⁵ On top of these reductions, reports indicate that the FBI has or plans to cut its Cyber Division staff by half.¹⁶ In an environment of escalating cyber risk, this redirection of expertise is not merely shortsighted—it puts Americans directly in harm’s way. Weakening U.S. cyber defenses at this moment creates avoidable national security vulnerabilities—openings that sophisticated foreign actors are already probing and prepared to exploit.

Taken together, these actions are more than just a routine shift in administration priorities; they represent a systematic dismantling of the very institutions that protect Americans in their homes, online, and in their communities. The fact that the majority of individuals arrested during immigration enforcement operations to date have had no criminal history belies the administration’s claim that it is targeting the “worst of the worst.” Instead, it suggests that federal law enforcement capacity is being sacrificed to fuel a politically orchestrated deportation drive.

⁹ Perry Stein, “A quarter of FBI agents are assigned to immigration enforcement, per FBI data,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 8, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/10/08/fbi-agents-reassigned-immigration>.

¹⁰ Bob Ortega & Allison Gordon, “Gun crime cases fall as agents shift to immigration crackdown,” *CNN*, Nov. 20, 2025, <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/10/15/us/trump-immigration-atf-gun-cases-invs>.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² Nehamas, Keller, et al., “Homeland Security Missions Falter Amid Focus on Deportations.”

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ Patrick Howell O’Neill and Jeff Stone, “Homeland Security Cyber Personnel Reassigned to Jobs in Trump’s Deportation Push,” *Bloomberg*, Oct. 8, 2025, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-10-08/homeland-security-cyber-personnel-reassigned-to-jobs-in-trump-s-deportation-push>.

¹⁵ “CISA Directs Federal Agencies to Mitigate Vulnerabilities in F5 Devices,” *Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency*, Oct. 15, 2025, <https://www.cisa.gov/news-events/alerts/2025/10/15/cisa-directs-federal-agencies-mitigate-vulnerabilities-f5-devices>.

¹⁶ Tim Starks, “Senators, FBI Director Patel clash over cyber division personnel, arrests,” *CyberScoop*, Sept. 16, 2025, <https://cyberscoop.com/senators-fbi-director-patel-clash-over-cyber-division-personnel-arrests/>.

That tradeoff is indefensible, and it puts Americans at risk to serve a political narrative, not a security strategy.

Given these significant concerns, we request that you provide the following documents and information, as well as a briefing to our staff, by January 19th, 2026:

1. A full accounting of personnel diverted to immigration enforcement from all federal agencies since January 20, 2025, including numbers, assignment duration, and mission details.
2. A list of all investigations paused, terminated, or reassigned as a result of, in whole or in part, these diversions, including those related to child exploitation, cyber intrusions, human trafficking, drug smuggling, domestic extremism, terrorism financing, and violent crime.
3. Any threat, risk, or operational assessments informing the decision to divert personnel. If there are no such assessments, please explain what information was used to make the decision.
4. All formal taskings or communications directing agencies to provide personnel for immigration enforcement surge operations.
5. Any internal objections raised by agency leadership or career investigators regarding the diversions, and how these objections were addressed.
6. Any internal assessments completed to gauge the impacts of these diversions, including on investigations into child exploitation, human trafficking, cybercrime, counter narcotics, and national security investigations.

Federal law enforcement agencies exist to protect the American people—to dismantle criminal networks, safeguard children, secure critical infrastructure, and counter foreign threats. Diverting these experts from their missions without strategic justification or operational need endangers public safety and undermines national security. We urge your administration to provide the requested information promptly and to reassess these reckless decisions.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Peter Welch

Peter Welch
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján

Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Alex Padilla

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Andy Kim

Andy Kim
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator