

**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026**

HEARINGS
BEFORE A
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

H.R. 4213

AN ACT MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Department of Homeland Security

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10:00 a.m. in Room 124, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Katie Britt (chairwoman) presiding.

Present: Senators Britt, Collins, Murkowski, Capito, Kennedy, Hyde-Smith, Hagerty, Murphy, Murray, Shaheen, Peters, and Van Hollen.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

STATEMENT OF HON. KRISTI NOEM, SECRETARY

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KATIE BRITT

Senator BRITT. The Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee will come to order. Secretary Noem, thank you so much for being here today to testify to the President's fiscal year 2026 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security. I am pleased to be joined by Senator Murphy, the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, as well as we have Vice Chair Murray that will be coming shortly. And of course, I am thrilled to have the Chair of our full appropriations committee, Chair Senator Collins, with us today. Thank you, Chair Collins for your leadership on this committee and your tireless effort to get us back to regular order, moving these bills not only through full committee, but making sure that they're seen on the floor.

Senator COLLINS. Yes.

Senator BRITT. Since January 20th, under President Trump's leadership, the Department has actually become a priority. Rather than turning U.S. Border Patrol agents and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers into paper pushers, President Trump has empowered the men and women of the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This has resulted in gaining more control on the border and the enforcement of our immigration laws.

In fact, President Trump has signed a new law, the Laken Riley Act, which further empowers ICE to help protect communities from criminal aliens. He has taken swift and decisive actions in other areas, such as restoring the Victims of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE) officers at ICE and reduced bureaucratic red tape that was counterproductive to achieving the mission.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has a vast, important, and complex mission, and its 250,000 employees are responsible for keeping Americans safe from coast to coast, on the water, and in the air. As Chair of the Homeland Security Appropriation Subcommittee, it is my responsibility to work with you, Madam Secretary, and my fellow Senators, to appropriate the resources DHS needs to carry out its mission.

One of the most important areas that we must dedicate resources to is border security and immigration enforcement. I want to say thank you to the brave men and women of CBP, and ICE who show up every single day to keep our borders secure, to keep our communities safe, and to enforce our immigration laws.

Since President Trump took back the White House, we have seen historically low levels of encounters along the Southwest Border. In March, 2024, Border Patrol encountered 337,473 people. Fast forward to March of 2025, under President Trump's leadership, Border Patrol encountered only 7,181 people. That's a 95 percent decrease. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

Under the Biden Administration, there were nearly two million gotaways. And in 2023, the Chief of Border Patrol testified that gotaways may have been under reported by as much as 20 percent. The work that President Trump and this Administration have done to curb the flow of illegal migration is truly incredible. We've gone from record high encounters under the previous administration to two consecutive months of record lows.

Ultimately, that means safer communities and families across our great country. But we cannot let up. We must continue to empower Border Patrol. We want our agents on the line to be equipped with the best tools available. We must also continue the renewed focus on interior enforcement where we have seen tremendous gain since President Trump took the oath of office. In fact, since President Trump's inauguration, there have been a 153 percent increase in removals stemming from ICE apprehensions, a true testament to the work done by DHS law enforcement officials that are working to safeguard our communities.

As you know, Madam Secretary, the ultimate goal of immigration enforcement lifecycle is to remove individuals that are here unlawfully. And I commend your department in the pursuit in the end of that goal, one of the results of our open border policies supported by the previous administration with significant growth in ICE's non-detained docket growing from \$3.7 million at the end of fiscal year 2021 to \$7.6 million at the end of 2024. That is a 105 percent increase.

Many will commit crimes while here waiting their turn to be processed, which is unacceptable, and why I fought so hard for the Laken Riley Act to pass Congress. And that is also why I was proud to be there when President Trump signed that into law. I am incredibly proud when you look at the work that Alabama does to support the Department of Homeland Security and the equities there in so many hardworking, dedicated public servants who show up every single day to fulfill that mission.

From the incredible collaboration between DHS and our college programs on research to the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) National Academy in Huntsville, to the Coast Guards Avia-

tion Training Center in Mobile, it's gratifying to see that I represent a state that plays such an important role in protecting our country.

Alabama is also home to some key institutions that fit within the administration's priorities of empowering state and local law enforcement to have a seat at the table when it comes to disaster recovery and national security, both Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Center for Domestic Preparedness and the National Computer Forensic Institute in Hoover provide key resources to local officials across our nation to ensure that they're equipped with the best knowledge, skills, and tools needed to protect and serve the United States of America.

It is unfortunate that trainings have been canceled, especially at a time when cities across this country begin to prepare for the World Cup and the Olympics. Madam Secretary, I am certainly open to conversations about how all of this evolves, but I want to make sure that we are looking at future threats as well as existing threats, and I believe that we can do both.

Another FEMA area that not only saves taxpayer dollars, but saves taxpayer lives is the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. Since President Trump signed the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, which authorizes BRIC, nearly \$5 billion has gone to mitigation projects across 55 states and territories, and 37 tribal nations that requested funding. This is clearly a popular and important program.

The program, obviously, is not without its challenges. Applying and implementing BRIC grants requires resources to many cities, states, and tribes that they may not have. But rather than ceasing to implement, we should work together to identify ways that BRIC could be amended to be less complex and more efficient.

Madam Secretary, the people up here look forward to working with you and your team. We look forward to conversations about the President's fiscal year 2026 budget for DHS. From what I've seen, I am personally supportive of zeroing out the Shelter and Services Program, and I look forward to conversations about FEMA, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and Transportation Security Administration (TSA). I hope that we will see requests for base increases to CBP, ICE, and elsewhere within DHS.

You have an incredibly difficult job, Madam Secretary, and have stepped up to do it during one of the most challenging times. I want to thank you for your service, and I look forward to your testimony today, and to working with you and your team to making sure that America's borders are safe and its people are secure.

I now turn to Senator Murphy, and recognize him for his opening remarks.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER MURPHY

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Secretary, thank you for being here. I'm sorry that I missed your call yesterday. I look forward to working closely with you.

I say this with seriousness and respect, but your department is out of control. You are spending like you don't have a budget. You're on the verge of running out of money for the fiscal year. You

are illegally refusing to spend funds that have been authorized by this Congress and appropriated by this committee.

You are ignoring the immigration laws of this nation, implementing a brand-new immigration system that you have invented that has little relation to the statutes that you are required, that you are commanded to follow as spelled out in your oath of office. You are routinely violating the rights of immigrants who may not be citizens, but whether you like it or not, they have constitutional and statutory rights when they reside in the United States.

Your agency acts as if laws don't matter, as if the election gave you some mandate to violate the Constitution and the laws passed by this Congress. It did not give you that mandate. You act as if your disagreement with the law or even the public's disagreement with the law is relevant and gives you the ability to create your own law. It does not give you that ability.

Let's start with your spending. You are on track to trigger the Antideficiency Act. That means you are going to spend more money than you have been allocated by Congress. This is a rare occurrence and it is wildly illegal. Your agency will be broke by July, over 2 months before the end of the fiscal year. You may not think that Congress has provided enough money to ICE, but the Constitution and the Federal law does not allow you to spend more money than you have been given or to invent money.

And this obsession with spending at the border, as the chairwoman mentioned, has left the country unprotected elsewhere. The security threats to the United States are higher, not lower before than when before Trump came to office to fund the border. You have illegally gutted spending for cybersecurity as we speak. Russian and Chinese hackers are having a field day attacking our nation. You've withdrawn funds for disaster prevention. Storms are going to kill more people in this country because of your illegal withholding of these funds. Your myopia about the border fueled by President Trump's prejudice against people who speak a different language, has shattered many of this country's most important defenses.

Now, let's talk about the impoundments. When Congress appropriates funds for a specific purpose, the administration has no discretion as to whether to spend or not spend that money, unless you go through a very specific process with this committee.

Let me give you two of many instances of this illegal impoundment. The first is a Shelter and Services Program. Senator Britt may want to zero that account out, but that account is funded, and it was funded in a bipartisan way. You don't like the program. Your policy is to treat migrants badly. I think that's abhorrent. But it doesn't matter that you don't like the program. You cannot cancel spending in this program, and you cannot use the funds as you have to fund other things like ICE.

You have also canceled citizenship and integration grants, which help lawful permanent residents become citizens, helping them take the citizenship test. I know your goal is to try to make life as hard as possible for immigrants, but that goal is not broadly shared by the American public. That's why Congress in a bipartisan way, for decades, has funded this program to help immigrants in this country become citizens.

Now, let's talk about why encounters at the Southern Border are down so much. This is clearly going to be your primary talking point. Today, you will tell us that it represents a success, but the primary reason why encounters are down is because you are brazenly violating the law.

Every hour of every day, you are refusing to allow people showing up at the Southern Border to apply for asylum. I acknowledge that you don't believe that people should be able to apply for asylum, but you don't get to choose that. The White House doesn't get to choose that.

The law requires you to process people who are showing up at the border and who claim asylum. Why? Because our asylum law is a bipartisan commitment, an effort to correct for our nation's unconscionable decision to deny entry to Jews to this country who were being hunted and killed by the Nazis. Our nation's Republicans and Democrats decided, wrote it into law, that we would not repeat that horror ever again. And thus, we would allow for people who were fleeing terror and torture to come here, arrive at the border, and make a case for asylum.

Finally, let's talk about these disappearances. In an autocratic society, people who the regime does not like are people who are protesting the regime. They are just often picked up off the street, spirited away sometimes to open-ended detention. Sometimes they're never seen again. What you are doing, both the individuals who have legal rights to stay here, like Kilmar Abrego Garcia, or students who are just protesting Trump's policies, is immoral, and to follow the theme, it is illegal. You have no right to deport a student visa holder with no due process simply because they have spoken in a way that offends the President. You can't remove migrants who a court has given humanitarian protection from removal.

Now, reports suggest that you are planning to remove immigrants with no due process and send them to prisons in Libya. Libya is in the middle of a civil war. It is subject to a Level 4 travel advisory. Meaning, we tell American citizens never to travel to Libya. We don't have an Embassy there because it is not safe for our diplomats. Sending migrants with pending asylum claims into a war zone just because it's cruel, is so deeply disturbing.

Listen, I understand that my Republican colleagues on this committee don't view the policy the way that I do. My Republican colleagues don't share my level of concern for the way that this administration treats immigrants. That's fine. But what I don't understand is why we don't have consensus in the Senate and on this committee, on the decision by this administration to impound the spending that we have decided together to allocate in defense of this nation.

We as an appropriations committee, we work interminable hours to write and pass a budget. This budget is really hard to write and pass. And so, we make ourselves irrelevant when we allow the Administration to ignore what we have decided. And then when we look the other way, when the Administration rounds up immigrants who are here illegally and have committed no offense, no offenses worthy of detainment, we also do potential irreversible damage to the Constitution. These should not be partisan concerns, de-

stroying the power of Congress eroding individuals' constitutional rights. This should matter to both parties.

Madam Secretary, thank you for being here and I look forward to your testimony.

Senator COLLINS [presiding]. Madam Secretary, let me first explain that Chair Britt is trying to cover two different subcommittees. She will be returning, but in the meantime, has asked that I take the gavel. And, fortunately, that means that I get to welcome you, but also ask the first questions. But first we want to hear your statement, so please proceed.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF HON. KRISTI NOEM

Secretary NOEM. Yes. Well, thank you, Senator Collins. And I do want to thank Senator Britt as well for bringing this group of individuals together for this committee hearing so that we could talk about the priorities of the United States of America, and what we can do to work together to secure our homeland. I do want to thank Senator Murphy as well, and look forward to our conversations that we can have today and far into the future.

In the first 100 days, the Trump administration has already delivered for the American people, a drastic turnaround in homeland security from the Southern Border, to investing in our Coast Guard, to cybersecurity. And we are just getting started. I'm very proud of the accomplishments that we have made so far, and working with President Trump and his leadership since he took office.

At the Southern Border, we have obtained near total control with a 95 percent decrease in daily encounters since President Trump took office. March, saw the lowest number of encounters in this nation's history at less than 7,200. There were days in there where we had less than 200 encounters a day, which is absolutely remarkable. And again, that is the lowest number of encounters at the border in this nation's history.

Under the previous Administration, when Joe Biden was the President of the United States, U.S. Customs and Border Protection was at times encountering over 15,000 people per day. This astonishing turnaround is a testament to the resolve and to the leadership of President Trump to make America safe, and to the incredible work of the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security.

The secure border has allowed Border Patrol to zero in on the cartels and on illicit activities that are going on. President Trump has designated six different cartels and violent criminal gangs as foreign terrorist organizations. This has allowed us to use a whole-of-government approach in how we go after drug traffickers and human traffickers. And in March, fentanyl traffic at the border fell by 54 percent compared to the previous year.

We're enforcing immigration laws to identify, arrest, detain, and remove dangerous illegals from our country. We're prioritizing those who have committed crimes, aliens who are a threat to our public safety and to our national security, especially those who are affiliated with terrorist organizations such as Tren de Aragua and MS-13. This includes those who also have final orders of removal. We've worked to enforce President Trump's America First trade

agenda through the U.S. Custom and Border Protections enforcement.

The Biden Administration's policies hollowed out our economy and America's industrial base, and it shipped our jobs overseas. President Trump is changing that. His historic actions are proving that tariffs are an effective negotiating tool to address trade imbalances. And, in fact, companies are reshoring jobs here every single day.

The Department of Homeland Security is reforming and we're rethinking Federal involvement in emergency management. President Trump recently announced that there will be a FEMA Review Council, which I will co-chair with the Department of Defense Secretary. This council is charged with fixing a broken system that's returning power to state emergency management directors and making America safe.

We're also taking steps to defend the nation's transportation systems, which are vulnerable to targets and to attacks. The Transportation Security Administration is responsible for ensuring the security of all those who travel. In a single day, there are over 45,000 flights in this country with nearly 2.9 million passengers in the United States. We're fulfilling our obligation to launch REAL ID, which happened yesterday, and we follow Federal law as it was passed 20 years ago. Validated IDs will secure travel, safeguard our elections, and make sure that we never open a door to an opportunity for another tragedy like 9/11 again.

As technology advances, so do the threats to our nation, and that's why cybersecurity is a crucial component of our security measures we're taking seriously and investing in going forward. Countries like communist China have built a capability and the intent to infiltrate and potentially disrupt our critical infrastructure. But despite these threats, the Biden Administration instead used CISA to play politics and to police speech.

Under President Trump, we've been working to get CISA back on-mission, and make sure that they are securing our infrastructure. The Coast Guard is the only branch of the U.S. Armed Services that are under the Department of Homeland Security. It has many missions with specialized needs, and as we secure the southern border, the cartels have shifted their activities out to the maritime borders.

The Coast Guard has already surpassed fiscal year 2024 drug interdiction numbers, and search and rescue, and illegal interdiction. Still, the Coast Guard is facing our greatest readiness challenge since World War II. With Force Design 2028, we will transform the Coast Guard to make it a more agile, capable, and responsive force.

And since I took office, one of the responsibilities that I have is reforming the Secret Service in the wake of the July 13th assassination attempt. We have needs there that I'm hoping you will consider. We've reassessed the Secret Service's needs. We've refocused recruitment away from Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) objectives, and instead focused people in on investing in the agency's zero-fail mission.

These accomplishments are just a portion of what the Department of Homeland Security has achieved with President Trump's

leadership in the last 100 days. And with the support of this committee, I'm hopeful that we'll be able to make this department more efficient and more effective in securing our nation.

I'm so grateful to the men and women of the department, and they are examples of bravery, patriotism, and dedication. It's our responsibility to continue providing them with resources, training, and equipment that they need to do their jobs.

Thank you so much for your support, for the opportunity to be here, and I look forward to the discussion.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. KRISTI NOEM

INTRODUCTION

Chair Britt, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished Members of this Committee:

It is a privilege to present to you the Department of Homeland Security's critical work to keep our Nation safe and share our priorities for Fiscal Year 2026. In the first 100 days under President Trump's leadership, the Department has established the most secure border in our Nation's history, kept dangerous criminals out of America, and deported illegal aliens who threaten our people. We will not stop until there are none left.

The President's FY 2026 Budget request for DHS will establish a firm foundation upon which to surge resources in support of the Administration's border security and immigration enforcement objectives. The Administration has requested over \$175 billion for DHS as part of the reconciliation bill currently under consideration in Congress. Reconciliation would empower the DHS to implement the President's mass removal campaign and secure the border.

As we work to implement President Trump's policies, I am determined to lead the over 270,000 men and women of the Department in the most efficient and effective way possible to safeguard our Nation. While the Department can seem disparate—23 component offices with broad ranging missions sets—we are united in our resolve to protect the homeland and stand ready to defend these United States against threats by air, land, sea or cyberspace. From clearing the streets of terrorists to deploying to disaster-ridden communities to help after a natural disaster, the brave men and women serving on our front lines must be fully equipped to perform their duty to keep America safe and secure.

Under President Trump's leadership, I am committed to securing our Nation's borders, enforcing immigration laws, securing cyberspace and critical infrastructure, enabling transportation and trade, combating exploitation, and ensuring American resilience and preparedness.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection, for instance, is now focused on critical border security front line operations instead of serving as a pass-through agency processing illegal aliens into our country like under the last administration. The message has gotten out worldwide that America is now enforcing our laws and the border is closed. The issuing of Notices to Appear, Withdrawals, and Expedited Removals decreased by 99 percent from January 21 through April 15 of 2025, compared to the same timeframe in Fiscal Year 2024. There has been a 93 percent decrease in inadmissibility encounters throughout the southwest border since January 21, 2025. We have also seen a 94 percent decrease in encounters of unaccompanied alien children.

America is witnessing a historic decrease in illicit drug traffic due to the Trump Administration's policy changes, swift repatriation efforts, aggressive prosecutorial initiatives, and significant messaging campaigns. In March of 2025, illicit fentanyl traffic at the southwest border fell by 54 percent compared to March of 2024. The U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Customs and Border Protection have seized nearly 232,000 pounds of fentanyl and other illicit drugs—stopping them from ever reaching American communities.

There has been a significant decline in the number of illegal aliens coming over the border, as many are turning back before they even get here. March of 2025 saw the lowest number of border encounters in recorded history, at just under 7,200. On February 25, 2025, Border Patrol encountered a record low daily total of less than 160 illegal aliens at the southern border. Overall, border encounters have fallen by

99 percent, and there has been a 95 percent decrease in the number of estimated gotaways—the biggest threat to public safety.¹

Following the Trump Administration's designation of six cartels and two transnational gangs as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, we have been able to use a whole-of-government approach to crack down on these vicious groups, treating them like the terrorists they are. Under President Trump, DHS is committed to complete construction of the southern border wall, a commonsense solution to securing our border. Currently, we have more than 85 miles of new border barrier, 17 miles of which are waterborne barriers, in various stages of construction and planning. We are also working with DoD and the Texas National Guard to deploy temporary barriers to include concertina wire, razor wire, chain link fencing, and additional barriers. This is in addition to the Administration's request for billions of additional dollars for border barrier like new primary and secondary border wall systems, waterborne barrier systems, and technology where wall is currently installed but lacks the completed systems needed.

We are committed to enforcing the United States' immigration laws. Our priority is to identify, arrest, detain, and remove dangerous criminal illegal aliens and those with final orders of removal. We are giving illegal aliens the opportunity to voluntarily self-deport using the CBP Home app, in response and contrast to the Biden Administration's utilization of the CBP One app, which allowed more than 1 million aliens to illegally enter the United States. Self-deportation is the best option for illegal aliens, while preserving our law enforcement resources. It saves our taxpayer dollars and allows us to focus valuable resources on dangerous criminal illegal aliens.

Our enforcement efforts prioritize illegal aliens who have committed crimes and are a threat to public safety and national security, including aliens who are affiliated with Foreign Terrorist Organizations like Tren de Aragua and MS-13. However, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has the authority to deport anyone in the country here illegally, which is a crime.

The number of suspected gang members U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has arrested since January 20, 2025, represents a 105 percent increase compared to the same period in Fiscal Year 2024. The number of known or suspected terrorists we have arrested from January 20 to mid-April this year represents a 700 percent increase compared to the same period in Fiscal Year 2024.²

We have secured the border, decreased drug trafficking, and arrested criminal illegal aliens, but we need Congress to secure investments in staffing, infrastructure, technology, information sharing, and public-private partnerships to ensure these successes continue.

TRADE ENFORCEMENT

Our Homeland Security mission includes safeguarding the American worker. We are committed to enforcing President Trump's America First Trade Agenda. On April 2, 2025, Liberation Day, President Trump announced new tariffs on 185 countries to address the National emergency posed by the large and persistent goods trade deficits that is driven by the absence of reciprocity in our trade relationships. That day, he hammered home that the days of unilateral American disarmament in trade policy are over.

As U.S. Customs and Border Protection enforces tariffs on imports and Homeland Security Investigations performs criminal investigations on illicit trade, travel, and finance, the Department of Homeland Security stands on the frontlines of America's economic defense. We have been open and receptive to reasonable overtures made by our trading partners, who have come to the negotiating table. This has proven what we have known all along: tariffs work.

We've implemented automated systems, targeted inspections, and field guidance in the hands of frontline officers to improve tariff collections. In Antidumping and Countervailing Duty revenue collection, we secured \$1.1 billion in additional revenue as a result of targeted reviews of 774 shipments that were detected as discrepant for Antidumping and Countervailing Duty payment. Since January 20, 2025, we have collected over \$30 billion in tariffs. With a 99 percent collection rate, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has consistently shown to be an extremely reliable enforcement arm in collecting tariff revenue.

We play a critical role in enforcing U.S. laws prohibiting imports of goods made with forced labor, which is a form of human trafficking. In enforcing these laws to

¹ A gotaway is an illegal entry that was detected and that all efforts to continue tracking the entry have stopped.

² ICE arrest data is current through April 16, 2025.

include the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, we keep these illicit goods from entry into our markets, preventing malign actors from profiting off human rights abuses and undermining U.S. businesses and their workers with unfairly traded goods. Eliminating goods made with forced labor from global supply chains makes legitimate supply chains more resilient and allows American made products to compete on a level playing field.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Keeping American travelers safe requires that we safeguard our inherently open and vulnerable transportation systems. The Transportation Security Administration is directly responsible for ensuring Americans can travel within the U.S. safely and securely. In a single day, the U.S. sees over 45,000 flights and 2.9 million airline passengers cross more than 29 million miles of air space.³ In addition to mention maritime and land-based public transport.

We will do what other administrations failed to do—follow the law and implement the REAL ID program to stop domestic air travel of illegal aliens, criminals, and foreign nationals using fraudulent identification. This law was passed over 20 years ago, and 81% percent of American travelers are already REAL ID compliant. We will ensure compliance and security. REAL ID was created to help ensure that no horrific attack like the one on 9/11 will ever happen again. To prepare for implementation which began on May 7, 2025, we have been working closely with States to ensure compliance and urge every American to obtain a REAL ID for smoother and more secure air travel.

The Transportation Security Administration continues to improve efficiency while enhancing security through growth of the TSA PreCheck program, accounting for over one-third of all travel volume. Over 21 million travelers have seen how easy it is to enroll in TSA PreCheck, with reduced pricing for enrollments and renewals, making it more affordable for all eligible U.S. travelers.

CYBERSECURITY AND COMBATTING CYBER CRIME

In the hyper-connected 21st century, securing the homeland now includes protecting our cyber infrastructure. The threat environment to our homeland through cyberspace now changes by the nanosecond, and we must keep up. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency proactively addresses a rapidly evolving cyber threat environment and thwarts cyber-attacks from foreign adversaries and cyber criminals. These attacks continue to grow in frequency, scope, and severity, as demonstrated by the recent cyber espionage campaign by the threat actor known as Salt Typhoon, which resulted in the compromise of private communications of several high-profile individuals from adversaries and criminals who seek to do us harm.

China has repeatedly demonstrated its capability and intent to infiltrate and potentially disrupt critical systems within the United States. Chinese-affiliated actors have compromised multiple telecommunications, energy, transportation, and water critical infrastructure organizations across the country. Every day, the Department of Homeland Security works with government, industry, and international partners to prevent, detect, and respond to cyber intrusions to U.S. critical infrastructure.

We have dramatically increased our cyber operations to prevent threats and address vulnerabilities within the Federal Government. This effort goes hand-in-hand with our critical infrastructure efforts, as China and other nation States are often leveraging the same tools and tactics to weaken and spy on the U.S. Our unique authorities and positioning between the Intelligence Community, law enforcement, industry, and international partners is critical to understanding cyber adversary intent and applying critical protections domestically.

U.S. SECRET SERVICE

Since the beginning of the Trump Administration, the men and women of the U.S. Secret Service have ensured the safety of protectees during more than 1,400 official visits and successfully secured the safety of visiting world leaders at over 270 protective visits. At the same time, Secret Service investigative operations have recovered hundreds of millions of dollars and bolstered the law enforcement partnerships that enable these types of operations. In the first 2 months of this Administration, the agency's criminal and cyber investigations have enabled the Secret Service to return over \$226,000,000 in forfeited assets to American people who were victims of crimes and incurred financial loss.

³ Air Traffic By The Numbers Federal Aviation Administration.

Secret Service manpower needs have been reassessed in the wake of the July 13, 2024, assassination attempt on President Trump. We have since implemented targeted recruiting for experience and training that is transferable to specialty teams. We also created a talent pipeline with military organizations whose missions align with the Secret Service's technical requirements and have advanced digital platforms to enhance job candidate outreach and engagement.

Secret Service has executed two nationwide advertising campaigns to increase recruitment, which are already yielding incredible recruiting results. Under President Trump, the Secret Service has had a 194 percent increase in applications since this period last year and have hired the most Special Agents in the agency's history. We are on track to almost double last year's law enforcement hiring.

U.S. COAST GUARD

The U.S. Coast Guard is a central pillar of American national security and power projection. As a military service and law enforcement organization, the Coast Guard faces a unique set of operational challenges and opportunities, necessitating a unique posture for rapid response to a variety of evolving missions with a modernized fleet that supports these requirements. As the Arctic increases in importance to American security, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned as the only military service possessing the fleet necessary to break polar ice and maintain sea lanes.

The Coast Guard is facing the greatest readiness crisis since World War II. We are acting now through Force Design 2028 to restore capability and deter emerging threats. With Congress' help, we will transform the Coast Guard and deliver a future-ready force. President Trump and I are fully aligned in their directive: reinvigorate the Coast Guard or risk strategic failure.

Focused on four campaigns—Force Design 2028 will reform the U.S. Coast Guard's personnel, organization, contracting and acquisition, and technology. Increased national demand for our Coast Guard requires a larger, more capable military workforce. This campaign will improve training systems, boost access to medical care, and modernize both the Coast Guard Reserve and the civilian management system.

As global security threats, technological advancements, and operational demands continue to evolve, the Coast Guard must adapt its organizational construct and internal decision-making and governance processes to remain relevant, effective, and responsive. We will develop a high velocity acquisition and contracting system to rapidly deliver the assets the Service needs to fulfill its commitment to the American people. The Coast Guard will accelerate the adoption of secure, state-of-the-market technologies to enhance data sharing, situational awareness, and operational effectiveness.

The great men and women of our U.S. Coast Guard are excited to support the efforts of the Administration to secure our border and strengthen our economy. The Coast Guard continues to conduct search and rescue missions, and to detect, deter, and interdict illegal migration, drug smuggling, and other malign activity before it reaches our shores.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE

The Federal Government's role in emergency management and response needs to be both reformed and reimagined. Under President Trump's leadership, we are reorienting the Federal Emergency Management agency's responsibilities and eliminate the dysfunction of the current agency as it exists today. We need to enable preparedness against global and dynamic threats and hazards, while providing expeditious, effective, and impartial response to disasters. This alignment seeks to empower State and local jurisdictions and individuals to engage more actively in national resilience and preparedness.

Just four days after returning to office, President Trump directed aggressive actions to expedite response and recovery in areas recently devastated by hurricanes or wildfires. Within those first four days, President Trump was on the ground meeting survivors in North Carolina who endured Hurricane Helene and in California who endured preventable wildfires around Los Angeles County. Within days of the President's visit, we registered 2,600 families in North Carolina that desperately needed help and reduced by nearly 80 percent the number of assistance cases stuck in bureaucratic red tape. While taxpayer dollars continue to subsidize the majority of disaster response and recovery costs, we are identifying ways to preserve these tax dollars or use them more responsibly.

The American people need action not red tape, and the President continues to identify opportunities to enhance efficiency while expediting response to ongoing natural disasters, including severe weather, tornadoes, flooding, or wildfires across

multiple States. Thanks to President Trump's approval of Stafford Act declarations, we provided over \$58 million dollars in assistance directly to survivors and enabled rapid deployment of Incident Management Assistance Teams, emergency communication support, and Urban Search and Rescue teams, bolstering State and local disaster response operations.

President Trump remains committed to saving American lives and livelihoods, and we will institute commonsense approaches to achieve national security and resilience while empowering State and local governments and the strongest of all American citizens.

CONCLUSION

As the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, I can proudly say that with honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values. The achievements I share are just a few examples of what we have accomplished in just 100 days. With a job as big as the one the men and women of this Department take on every day, it is impossible to list all of the things that its 23 components are doing to protect the American people and improve operations to deliver a more responsive and efficient government.

I am grateful to the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security who exude bravery, dedication, and patriotism as they carry out their sworn duties allowing the American people to sleep better at night. We dutifully ask Congress to continue providing our men and women with the resources that they need to do their jobs.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator BRITT [presiding]. Thank you so much, Madam Secretary. I'd like to first recognize Chair Collins for her round of questioning.

DRUG TRAFFICKING IN MAINE

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Secretary, I want to bring to your attention an important issue that may not yet be one that you've been briefed on. In August of 2023, DHS issued a memo in which the department stated that it had identified more than 270 Chinese-backed illegal marijuana operations in the State of Maine alone, producing up to an estimated \$4.3 billion in illicit revenue. These grow houses are primarily run by Chinese organized crime syndicates with ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

Our sheriffs and local law enforcement have worked night and day to shut down these grow houses that tend to be located in very rural areas of the state. I hope that the President's more detailed budget requests include funding that can be used to help supplement the county, state, and local law enforcement efforts. United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has also been involved. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has been involved. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is starting to get involved, but DHS obviously has an important role to play. So I hope you will commit today to joining this all-of-government effort to shut down these dangerous illegal grow houses.

Undoubtedly, there's human trafficking going on as well. The marijuana is destroying these houses with black mold because it's grown inside to try to hide what is going on, and it's being smuggled to other states. This isn't just a problem in Maine. Some 22 states have similarly found these illegal grow operations with ties to transnational criminal organizations in China.

Secretary NOEM. Well, thank you, Senator Collins. I appreciate you bringing this to my attention and this important discussion.

Obviously, we're very concerned with securing our border and knowing who's coming into our country illegally, but also who's already here. And so, you pointing out the fact that we have investments in this country, businesses, and marijuana grow houses that have a presence of ties to the People's Republic of China (PRC) is incredibly alarming.

So I agree that we should work together to see what we can do. As you know, the Department of Homeland Security, our mission is to secure the homeland. I tell people quite often that my responsibility lies with everyone who's in this country, comes into this country, or leaves every product that's here that leaves or comes in. And then everything on the Internet as well that's communicated or processed. This is alarming that we have China. Not only are they stealing our IP, manipulating their currency, but they're building a presence in this country as well. And so, everything that we can do to make sure that we're addressing that and not allowing them to get a foothold within the center of our country and in our important states like Maine, is incredibly important. So, thank you for bringing it to the attention of everyone today, and I commit to working with you.

H-2A AND H-2B VISAS

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Madam Secretary. As you undoubtedly know, Maine is a great destination for tourists. Last year, we had 14.8 million tourism visits. We're a state of only 1.3 million people. I imagine it's similar to some of what you've experienced when you were governor. So, Maine is heavily dependent, particularly our hospitality industry and our agricultural employers, on seasonal temporary workers from other countries who come here under the H-2A program for agricultural workers and the H-2B programs for hospitality workers.

There's no way that our state of 1.3 million has the workforce to deal with the influx of tourists and to get our crops out of the ground. Our small businesses, our inns, our restaurants, and our hotels are perfect examples of where foreign nationals who come to our country temporarily to benefit from, but also contribute to the American economy in a lawful way are absolutely critical.

I know that some of the visas have been released by the department, and I would ask for your help in expediting the release of the H-2B visas, in particular, given the upcoming tourism season.

Secretary NOEM. Thank you for that question, Senator. And you know, as you know, the number of visas allowed is set in statute by Congress, but there is some latitude given to the Secretary, so I certainly take your request and know that many others have asked us to go and give as much latitude as possible, and we are certainly considering and willing to consider that going forward.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. My time has expired, so I'm just going to put one quick item on your radar screen. And that is, we're seeing some college students from Canada who go to school in northern Maine at the University of Maine at Pascal, having difficulty in crossing the border, which they used to be able to do very easily.

They're totally legal, they have student visas, but they're being subjected to extensive searches and questioning. I don't want us to

discourage Canadian students from studying at the northern Maine institutions that we have for education. So again, I just want to put that on your radar screen.

There are so many others who do deserve scrutiny, but these are duly enrolled Canadian students, and they've been crossing the border for years without trouble, and lately they're being subjected to extensive searches and questioning despite having their visas and other documents in order.

Secretary NOEM. Okay. I will certainly look into that.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Senator BRITT. Thank you. Vice Chair Murphy.

DEPORTATIONS OF LEGAL RESIDENTS

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much. Madam Secretary, AI is an enormous growing industry, critical to the future economic health of the country. We have had the benefit over the years of the top talent in Artificial Intelligence (AI); researchers, and students, coming to the United States to help us grow that industry. But for the first time in the last 15 years, there are more top talented individuals and workers in AI leaving the country than coming here.

And the reason is pretty simple. People who are coming here to work from overseas through the visa program are very uncertain about what their rights are. And that is because of the actions this administration has taken. So I think it's important to get on the record for those individuals who are here currently and those thinking of coming to the United States to work or to study to understand what their rights are.

So let me ask you a series of pretty simple questions. Probably, the key of right amongst the five freedoms is the right to free speech, the right to express your own personal opinion about politics, culture, the economy. Do you believe that you have the right to detain or deport a U.S. citizen for simply expressing their political opinion, a U.S. citizen?

Secretary NOEM. No.

Senator MURPHY. No. Do you believe that you have the right to detain or deport a legal permanent resident for expressing their political opinion?

Secretary NOEM. I don't make decisions on legal status here in the United States. The Department of State does that, and I would say that as they've gone through an evaluation of who gets a visa, who gets legal status, green cards. They've been evaluating and discussing how that applies.

Senator MURPHY. I acknowledge you don't make—but if someone is a legal permanent resident of the United States, I'm not talking about an H-1B, or a student visa holder. I'm talking about a legal permanent resident. If you are a legal permanent resident, do you have the right to detain or deport that person simply for expressing their political opinion?

Secretary NOEM. The Department of State makes those decisions and the Department of Homeland Security.

Senator MURPHY. No, no, no, they don't. You make that decision about who you have the right to detain or deport. So, do you—you

are involved in that. Do you believe the United States, do you believe the law allows—

Secretary NOEM. The Department of Homeland Security under the Trump administration is enforcing the law, following the constitutional rights of folks who are here as citizens, those who are here legally, and those who are here illegally.

Senator MURPHY. So, illegal permanent resident is by definition here, legally. Do you believe—I think this is really troubling if you can't answer this simple question. Do you believe that the U.S. government can detain and deport a legal permanent resident for expressing a political opinion that the Administration disagrees with?

Secretary NOEM. The determination you're asking for is based on things that you are determining that the Secretary of State has considered and evaluated. We don't evaluate that, the administration, along with the partnership with the Department of State on what is political speech and what's an affiliation with the foreign terrorist group.

Senator MURPHY. Do you believe?

Secretary NOEM. That's the difference between what you're asking.

Senator MURPHY. Do you believe?

Secretary NOEM. We follow the direction of Federal law.

Senator MURPHY. That you can detain a legal resident for expressing a political opinion?

Secretary NOEM. We have not detained, or we have not deported anybody who's a legal permanent resident or citizen of the United States.

Senator MURPHY. Okay. Then say you don't have the ability to do that. Clarify that for the millions of—

Secretary NOEM. That's exactly what I'm doing. Is that we have followed exactly what the law is, and that we have not detained or deported anybody who's a citizen or has legal status in this country. We are focused on the worst of the worst, dangerous criminals to get them out of the country.

Senator MURPHY. You do not believe you have the ability to do that.

Secretary NOEM. We have not done that at all. And the Trump Administration has no plans to.

Senator MURPHY. Well, just because you haven't done it doesn't mean you won't do in the future.

Secretary NOEM. We're following Federal law to ensure that we're doing that.

Senator MURPHY. Do you believe you have the ability to do that or not?

COMPLYING WITH SUPREME COURT DECISION ON ABREGO GARCIA

Secretary NOEM. We are doing the exact appropriate thing in partnership with the Department of State and in partnership with the Trump Administration.

Senator MURPHY. Have you read the—I assume you have read the Supreme Court decision in the case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia?

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator MURPHY. That court decision requires the Administration to facilitate Kilmar Abrego Garcia's release from El Salvador.

Can you describe the steps that you have taken to facilitate this release? And specifically, can you answer as to whether you have reached out to your counterpart in El Salvador to facilitate Mr. Abrego Garcia's release?

Secretary NOEM. Abrego Garcia is a citizen of El Salvador, and should never have been in this country, and will not be coming back to this country. There is no scenario where Abrego Garcia will be in the United States. Again, if he were to come back, we would immediately deport him again because he is a terrorist. He's a human smuggler, and he is a wife beater.

Senator MURPHY. You've read the Supreme Court decision. Does the Supreme Court decision not require you to facilitate the return of Mr. Abrego Garcia?

Secretary NOEM. The Trump Administration is complying with all court orders and judges' orders.

Senator MURPHY. Does the Supreme Court order require you to facilitate the return of Abrego Garcia?

Secretary NOEM. Mr. Abrego Garcia is a citizen of El Salvador.

Senator MURPHY. Yes or no?

Secretary NOEM. It is up to the President of the El Salvador to make the decision whether he's coming back.

Senator MURPHY. You're a defendant on the case.

Secretary NOEM. It's been a big topic of conversation between all of us, between the country when the President visited the United States of America. It was discussed and talked about there. The President has been very clear on this issue as the Secretary of State. And I have as well. Abrego Garcia is not a citizen of this country, and is a dangerous individual who does not belong here.

Senator MURPHY. I'll not ask another question, Madam Chair.

Secretary NOEM. If he were to be back to this country, we would immediately deport him.

Senator MURPHY. But the discussion ends when the Supreme Court rules 9-0 that you have to facilitate his release, and the fact that you can't even acknowledge the wording of the order, which commands you to facilitate his release, and you advertise to this committee that you are going to willfully ignore the ruling.

Secretary NOEM. That is not true, Senator.

Senator MURPHY. That is incredibly chilling for the balance of powers in a democracy that relies on the executive branch to honor decisions made by the highest court of the land.

COMMITMENT TO BORDER SECURITY

Senator BRITT. Madam Secretary, I'd actually like to take a little bit of my time real quick to turn to an actual Maryland resident. And I believe if we're going to spend that much time talking about Mr. Abrego Garcia, we need to talk about Rachel Morin. And she was a citizen of Maryland who was brutally raped and murdered in 2023 by another criminal illegal alien from El Salvador who had no business being in the United States. May her story and others like it serve as a reminder to the human cost of unchecked illegal immigration policies, the need to secure our border, and the need to swiftly remove criminal, illegal aliens from the United States.

Speaking of, let's go back, take a look at what President Trump inherited. We talked about this earlier, but when Joe Biden took

office, there were 3.3 million people on the non-detained docket. When President Trump took office, that number had risen to 7.6 million people on the non-detained docket.

When you look at the docket, President Biden and his Administration spent their entire term simply allowing people and aliens to cross the border into our communities. Of those who had been given their final orders of removal, meaning they had their due process. The Biden Administration simply sat on their hands instead of actively working to remove those individuals. Which created chaos, and unfortunately, criminal opportunities on our interior.

Thankfully, we have new leadership at the White House and a department who will no longer tolerate the subversion of our immigration laws and activities. I think since we're here to talk about the budget today, that's what I'd like to talk about. What do you and your department need the brave men and women who serve alongside you in order to secure our border, in order to keep our interior safe from coast to coast, and to continue to make America a safe, secure, and prosperous place to be?

Secretary NOEM. Well, the Department of Homeland Security is tasked with overseeing 23 different components that are pretty broad. And it was formed after 9/11 in response to the terrorist attacks to help us secure our country and everything that's in the interior of our country.

The President's budget request along with reconciliation package, focus on what some of our greatest threats are that face our future and our children and grandchildren's ability to grow up here and to have a future. And that is continuing to secure our border, to make sure we're addressing technology needs that have been neglected for far too long, get our Coast Guard to the standard to what the missions are requiring them to be at to be successful.

Building more wall, more agents for CBP, more ICE agents and beds so that we can remove illegal criminals out of this country, and dangerous individuals that are threatening our public safety. And then, also, going forward and looking at how we conduct operations on training our law enforcement officers, how we can put CISA back on-mission at focusing on cybersecurity.

The requests going forward focus in those areas and TSA so that we have the technology upgrades that we need to really make sure that we are doing due diligence to secure our country and the systems that help run our critical infrastructure.

BORDER WALL

Senator BRITT. I really appreciate that, and I'd love commitment from you to continue to work on what it's that you need moving forward as this develops to make sure you have the resources to keep this country safe.

Your predecessor actually refused to call what was going on at the border a crisis. It is clear that's exactly what was happening. You also have shown that coming in, we did not need any new legislation to actually secure the border. You have taken action, President Trump has taken action to secure it. I mean, creating a space that we haven't seen in decades.

You've talked about a number of things. One of the things you just mentioned was a border wall. Can you talk about the construction of a border wall and what that would do for the men and women of CBP, and overall, at DHS? I know that we are a nation of immigrants. We're proud of that. We're also a nation of law, and lawlessness has to stop. And I believe that anybody on this dais that locks their door at night should understand the need for a border wall. The American people should have that level of security when they go to sleep at night. So, can you talk about the importance of that and kind of how you see that unfolding?

Secretary NOEM. We have currently over 700 miles of border wall on the Southern Border, and infrastructure that is there operating today. Since President Trump has been in office, we've constructed another 77 miles that is in place that is an inclusion of steel bollard wall that has been built, but also temporary walls that have been put forward with concertina wire and panels. And then also, we have some waterborne buoys that are being utilized as well.

We have 11 contracts that have been allocated to continue building infrastructure, and then also five more that are pending to be allocated to build more miles, to have that infrastructure there to help secure vulnerable areas.

Now, the border wall will look different based on what the topography is and the geography is of the area. So, there's some areas on the Northern Border, and the Southern Border, and out in our maritime infrastructure that we need that will have technology. It'll utilize Aerostar systems, radio frequencies, satellite systems. Those upgrades just simply haven't been made or prioritized under the last Administration and need to be done.

So, we will use a combination for what's appropriate out there for the topography and working with the local, state, and tribal areas to make sure that it's something that secures our country, but also is something that they can help support and secure as well.

Senator BRITT. Thank you for that commitment. Vice Chair Murray.

Senator MURRAY. Thank you very much, Chair Britt, and I look forward to working with you and Ranking Member Murphy in this Congress.

Madam Secretary, as Senator Murphy mentioned in his opening statement. Secretary Noem, under your leadership, we have seen you ignore our appropriation laws, our Constitution, common sense, and even basic humanity. And like a lot of Americans, I really have been horrified by the lawlessness, and incompetence, and cruelty that we have all witnessed.

And for all the talk about going after criminals, you have side-tracked DHS staff who are investigating drug dealers, terrorists, human traffickers, and rather than photo ops, we need more of your focus on providing basic diligence, because your crackdown has roped in American citizens and people who are here legally with no criminal record. Now, I'm not going to ask you whether that was right or wrong. I know it's wrong. The world knows it's wrong.

And I think the first thing the history is going to say about your leadership is that you are responsible for many of these travesties. So, I'm deeply concerned you've deported a 4-year-old U.S. citizen with cancer. You've disappeared people to a notorious prison in El Salvador, and you have spent \$100 million dollars in taxpayer dollars to air TV ads thanking President Trump. That is really reckless, it's unacceptable, and in my opinion, can't continue. The American people are paying for this with our taxpayer dollars and with their most basic rights.

FREEZE OF GRANT FUNDS

Now, in the last 3 months, you have frozen or canceled over \$100 billion in funding that was approved by Congress, bipartisan. We are talking about everything from disaster relief, to grants that keep people safe. But when my staff has requested information on the status of this unacceptable holdup, the Department failed to provide any acceptable justification.

This illegal freeze, and it is illegal, is taking a real toll on communities who are waiting on the investments that Congress has delivered. So, will you commit to immediately unpausing these funds?

Secretary NOEM. Well, Senator, thank you for covering a lot of topics there. Let me touch on a few of those right away.

Secretary NOEM. What the Trump Administration is doing is enforcing the law for the first time. Under the Biden Administration—

Senator MURRAY. I'm asking you about the funds.

Secretary NOEM. Illegal aliens were prioritized over American citizens. Now, the scales of justice have been leveled and no one is treated better than anyone else.

Senator MURRAY. Madam Chair, I'm going to reclaim my time. I asked you a specific—

Secretary NOEM. Citizens are treated the same, and illegal aliens and criminals are being deported.

Senator MURRAY. Madam Secretary, I'm asking you a specific question.

Secretary NOEM. The grants that you are referencing have been paused and reevaluated to make sure that they are truly being spent in the way to which they were appropriated.

Senator MURRAY. Correct.

Secretary NOEM. Many of these grants were being diverted and to things they were never intended.

Senator MURRAY. Madam Secretary, These funds were passed on a bipartisan basis by members in this Congress.

Secretary NOEM. Absolutely. And the Biden Administration perverted them in how they used them, diverted them to facilitate illegal immigration to house people in places like the Roosevelt Hotel, who held illegal criminals that took the life of Laken Riley.

Senator MURRAY. We're talking, Madam Chair about \$100 billion.

Secretary NOEM. I think we all recognize the victims have died and lost their children because of the situation.

Senator MURRAY. It is not credible, Madam Chair. It is not credible that \$100 billion is used to break the law. That just cannot be true.

OVERSPENDING OF ALLOCATED FUNDS

And let me change this a little bit. On the other hand, I am very concerned that DHS is now dramatically overspending funding that Congress has not provided. If you were a CEO doing that, I don't think you'd be in your job long. We need accountability and we need answers. And that includes informative responses to oversight questions sent to the Department over the last 3 months.

I am ranking member on this committee. I have worked with every member of this committee. We take our responsibility serious to fund your department and others. We need to have answers. We need to have accountability, and we need to make sure you're not overspending money that you were not allocated.

Secretary NOEM. Well, thank you for that question.

Senator MURRAY. Not really—that's a statement.

Secretary NOEM. Do you want me to respond?

Senator MURRAY. Well, you can.

Secretary NOEM. Well, I've worked many, many jobs in my life, but I also have been a CEO. I've run businesses, I've been a governor.

Senator MURRAY. I'm not questioning credentials. I questioning your spending.

Secretary NOEM. We are prioritizing where our security needs are in this country, and we are hoping that this body will agree that reconciliation is necessary to address the things that have been neglected in this country for too long. That we have the technology upgrades, the manpower upgrades that are necessary. So, the \$170 billion request for the Department of Homeland Security to make sure we have tools.

CONCERNS ABOUT FEMA AND DISASTER RELIEF

Senator MURRAY. My time is running out and I have a couple of additional questions. The fact is that you've not been given this funding. Saying that it's going to come in reconciliation that has not passed is not an acceptable answer.

I did want to ask about FEMA and disaster relief. This is really important. A lot of disaster relief has been politicized. You've endorsed eliminating FEMA outright. We have seen an upheaval at FEMA that is going to put lives in jeopardy. 1 in 5 FEMA employees have been pushed out taking this Administration's so-called "buyout offer".

We are losing indispensable staff just weeks away from fire and hurricane season, and over \$100 billion dollars in disaster relief and FEMA grants are still being held up. DHS is making it a lot harder to qualify for relief, something people in my home State of Washington are experiencing firsthand.

Multiple requests from governors have been rejected in recent weeks, including a request from our state, and we haven't been given any response about this. And I'm watching this and I'm thinking, has President Trump directed you to prioritize funding for Republican states?

Secretary NOEM. Absolutely not.

Senator MURRAY. Have you directed your staff to prioritize funding to Republican-led states over Democratic states?

Secretary NOEM. Absolutely not. There is—under this administration, there will not be any politicization of support relief, FEMA assistance, or grants given based on politics.

Senator MURRAY. There's a clear trend.

Secretary NOEM. Every single person will be treated the same. It will be very different than the Biden Administration.

Senator MURRAY. Madam Secretary, there's a clear trend of Republican-led states getting very fast responses and funding. Democrat-led states are being forced to wait. We have never treated FEMA as a partisan issue in this country. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator BRITT. Thank you. Senator Capito.

DECREASE IN BORDER CROSSINGS

Senator CAPITO. Thank you, Madam Chair, and Ranking Member. And it's great to see you, Secretary Noem. And it was a pleasure to serve with you in the House for so many years.

I just want to make a statement in the beginning because this chart, which you can't see, but many of us have seen, the blue lines being the number of people that were coming across the border during the Biden Administration. And then the red is what you and the President have done over the last 3 months. I say, congratulations. Results speak loudly. Not only are migrant encounters down 95 percent, but the gotaways are down 99 percent.

To put it simply, migrants are just not slipping through. They're not evading our border patrol. I boil it down to two basic strategies that the administration has done that the previous administration could have done, but totally ignored. One is deterrent. When possible illegals look to the United States and see that we are following through on deportation orders in larger numbers. I think that's a huge deterrence along with other things that are occurring.

The other one is enforcement. Enforcement of the law. You already just said that. So, is there anything else you would add, specifically, very shortly, that you can attribute this dramatic drop? You're being accused of breaking the law, and that's the reason the numbers are down. I personally don't believe that.

Secretary NOEM. Well, I think having a strong leader in the White House that says we will enforce our laws in this country has worldwide effects. In fact, in where I have traveled to countries in El Salvador, Mexico, and Columbia, their leaders and their government said, when you talk about the fact that you are now enforcing the laws in America, when your President talks about it, when we see these ads that are running in our country saying, if you want to come to the country and America illegally don't come. Come the legal way, do the right way.

We are now enforcing our laws. They say it has an overwhelming effect. In fact, in Mexico, some government officials, when I was there visiting with them, and the President said that they believe 500' to 600,000 people just in Mexico turned around before they ever got to our border in the last 3 months because they got the message clearly when they were on their way. They heard that, and they went back home.

Also, I would say Border Patrol is thrilled. They get to finally do their jobs right. They get to finally—the morale has never been bet-

ter. Recruitment is fantastic. ICE is recruiting, CBP is up 54 percent. I'd say the Coast Guard is up over 100 percent in recruitment, and the Secret Service is up over 200 percent. So, the fact that they have an Administration that's letting them do their jobs again and actually following the law, is something they're very proud of. And so, I think those two things are really what's making them proud.

NON-INTRUSIVE DRUG INSPECTION

Senator CAPITO. Okay. You and I talked about this on the phone because of the drug scourge, the non-intrusive inspection, which is a lot of the technologies that can detect in large when semis are coming through. There's a whole lot coming through the border, and we want to continue that free flow of goods. Where are you on that in this budget? Certainly, you need more dollars to be able to—I think the numbers are low; how many you actually inspect or have been inspected. You need the technology to move forward.

Secretary NOEM. Well, yes. Our ports of entry need new technology and scanners that we just simply aren't scanning many shipping containers right now adequately. A lot of our air freight isn't scanned. Some of these scanners that we have in place need infrastructure around them so that they work in the heat and in the rain. Sometimes they're dysfunctional and shut down. We have railroad cars coming in that aren't getting inspected, and then small packages small packages every day that are being shipped in by the millions that we are not inspecting at all.

So, the kind of technology needs that we have to invest in are costly, but they secure our country. And when we have a foreign enemy country like China and the PRC that's trying to kill off our next generation of Americans, which is what they're doing to weaken our economy and our society, those upgrades and that technology advancement will incredibly help us make sure that we know what's coming into this country and it's not a poison that will be killing our kids and our next generation.

Senator CAPITO. You certainly have my support with that. I did chair this subcommittee at one point with the ranking member. We were—he was chairing and I was ranking. So, we're getting to know each other very well. You have my support there.

I do want to say I am concerned about the FEMA issue coming from a small state that is subject to a lot of natural disasters, flooding in most cases. My experience with FEMA, has it been flawless? Has it been, you know, a smooth road? No. But I think it's a vital function, and I'm concerned if we turn it all over to the state's capacity for the state to really handle. This is something that—so I would ask you to tread lightly.

I don't really need a response there, but I do want to put on the record here that I am concerned. I do think we need a national response to disasters. Does it look just like FEMA? I hope the changes that are made will be able to have them to be able to react quickly, and to help our state and local resources.

I did invite you to the Advanced Training Center where we do training for Border Patrol. Look forward to seeing you there, and thank you very much.

Senator BRITT. Thank you so much, Senator Capito. And thrilled to hear about the morale at DHS. That's exciting, Madam Secretary. Next up, Senator Shaheen.

IMMIGRATION AT THE NORTHERN BORDER

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Secretary, for being here this morning, and for your testimony. I just want to—I'm not going to ask you to respond to this, but just to be clear, I think everybody on this committee agrees that we need to secure our Southern Border. We may disagree on exactly how to do that, but I think that is a value that most Americans share. I do think we can do it in a way that still provides due process to people who are here as green card holders.

And I'm particularly concerned when I get calls from New Hampshire citizens who are stopped at our border and interrogated without any process, without being told why they're being stopped. So, I just want to put that on your radar so that you understand that that is a concern that we are seeing and hearing from American citizens about.

I have been concerned for a long time through a number of administrations about the lack of technology on our northern border in New Hampshire. We have video cameras that are supposed to pick up people coming across the border, and there's no service to those video cameras because we don't have cell service on our Northern Border.

Our Border Patrol station in Pittsburgh gets its power from Canada. And in 2018, Congress passed the MOBILE NOW Act to speed up deployment of communications, equipment infrastructure on Federal property. It's not just a public safety issue. It's a national security imperative, as I'm sure you would agree.

So, understaffing, however, and red tape means that getting folks connected still takes way too long. And we've had some issues with the Department in trying to get some of this equipment that we need on our Northern Border. So, will you commit to ensuring that DHS will move expeditiously to improve communications infrastructure along New Hampshire's northern border?

Secretary NOEM. Yeah, Senator, I will work with you on this. This is something that's come up several times with many of our Senators and Congressmen and women that represent the northern border. And I think that's a concern I hear quite often from people is with all the focus on the Southern Border, you know, are you neglecting the Northern Border? And we are not. We have not pulled resources from the Northern Border, but we also recognize that we've got deficiencies there, too. We do have some predator drones that are up there.

Senator SHAHEEN. I'm sorry to interrupt, but the reality is that the Stonegarden funds that used to have a percentage dedicated to the Northern Border have been taken for the southern border so that our local law enforcement officials don't have the ability to access those funds and to get those grants in a way that's really important to help. So, I hope you will look into that.

Secretary NOEM. Yes. Those funds have been very important for our law enforcement. And so, those are being reevaluated as well

and assessed. And so, I've had several people indicate to me that those are important to their local areas and local communities.

The cameras you talked about, yes, do need to be fixed. The cell phone service and their reliance on that is not dependable. And we need the new technology upgrades in order to make sure that we can keep those operating. And we need more Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and counter-UAS technology at the northern border as well.

STAFFING SHORTAGES IN ICE—PARTNERED PRISONS

Senator SHAHEEN. I understand that ICE has entered into an interagency agreement with the Bureau of Prisons to hold ICE detainees in our Federal prison in Berlin, FCI, Berlin, New Hampshire. I'm sure that you're aware that the Bureau of Prisons has faced chronic shortages in staffing for a number of years. This is particularly evident in Berlin where it's being staffed at just over 60 percent for its corrections officers, and now it's hosting more than 230 detainees.

So, can you talk about how you're working to ensure that our Federal prisons who are under contract with ICE are adequately staffed? And will you commit to ensuring that the Bureau of Prisons under contract with ICE is given the support that they need in order to hold those detainees?

Secretary NOEM. Absolutely. That's all part of the evaluation that happens before that contract goes into place is making sure they have the staffing and the requirements that meet the level that ICE detention requires.

Many times, the request we hear from local, or state law enforcement, or prison systems that want to help facilitate the detention of illegal criminals such as we're addressing right now, are asking us to relax our Federal standards so that they qualify or asking us for more latitudes. So, our standards have been——

Senator SHAHEEN. I was just there. I can tell you, they were not asking that in Berlin.

Secretary NOEM. They may not have been up at your facility. But what I would say is that all of those boxes have to be checked, and staffing requirements have to be met in order for that contract to be facilitated and utilized.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, what I heard is that we have trouble attracting people; corrections officers, other staff that we need, psychologists and medical staff. And so, I think it's absolutely critical that we ensure that if ICE is going to use those facilities, that the funding is there to provide adequate staffing.

Secretary NOEM. Yes. Absolutely.

IMPROVEMENTS TO COAST GUARD FACILITIES

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I have another issue, and I'm out of time, but I just want to put on your radar screen that we appropriated \$200 million to recapitalize facilities for the Coast Guard. One of those facilities that was damaged in storms is at Newcastle, New Hampshire. It's a facility that serves the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. It's critical to national security. I hope you'll work with us to ensure that the funding goes to help rebuild those facilities that need it.

Secretary NOEM. Yeah, we'll certainly take a look at that. As you know, we've proposed a new investment and future for the Coast Guard called Force Design 2028. And so, we're excited about that because it recognizes the deficiencies that the Coast Guard has had to live with for far too long. It adds 15,000 Coasties to the force. It also addresses not just cutters and not just airframe, but also infrastructure, what we need for buildings and for docks and for abilities to ports and infrastructure to really facilitate what they really provide for us.

They are also a key part of not just search and rescue, but also our interdiction efforts right now as well. And we're not keeping up with the cartels out on the water.

Senator SHAHEEN. I'm a big fan. I just don't want us to divert that funding. Thank you.

Secretary NOEM. Right.

Senator BRITT. Senator Hyde-Smith.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you, Madam Chairman. And I certainly want to thank Madam Secretary for being here today, and so impressed with the way you have just taken off so quickly and leading this agency. You know, as a member of this body, as an American, but as the mother of a 26-year-old daughter, I certainly appreciate what you're doing to secure our homeland. And your commitment has just been unsurpassed by anybody.

Secretary NOEM. Thank you.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. And I've watched you closely, and it's a tall drink of water heading this agency. Is no small task, but I am certainly supporting you.

REDUCTIONS TO FEMA FUNDING

I would like to briefly mention the proposed reductions to the FEMA budget. You know, in Mississippi, we have hurricanes, we have tornadoes, and FEMA has been a part of my life ever since I have been in public office, because of the situations. Even Senator Shaheen was part of our tornado one time last year in Mississippi, and we had some recently that hasn't been approved yet.

Little town in Walthall County, Mississippi, called Tylertown, Mississippi had a tornado. I was there the day after the storm, and we are really seeking some relief there. But how will DHS make sure that states like Mississippi, which like I said, are feeling the impact of so many, will continue to receive the support they need to prepare for and recover from what we have now and future emergencies?

Secretary NOEM. Yes. President Trump has been very clear that he believes that the way that FEMA exists today should not continue. It needs to be reformed. It needs to empower states to build in the structure that they need to best respond to disasters. He's seen the failures over the years of FEMA, how it didn't show up for individuals. It targeted people based on political party. Claims that haven't been paid for 15 to 20 years, and recognizes the best responders are those locally and that the Federal government should be there to support.

So, his goal is to redo this agency in a way that empowers our states, recognizing that every state's not at the same level of response today. That it's going to take some effort to get them all

ready to really, truly take over the emergency management processes of their state. And so, what we can do to equip, and to train them, and then give control back locally is critically important.

Also, the grants that have come through FEMA, making sure they're not being abused to facilitate illegal immigration, to focus on true resiliency, on true helping building dams and infrastructure, culverts that are the right size, instead of using them for bike paths and shade trees like the Biden Administration did.

So, making sure that the dollars that we have in this agency, which consistently is spending in the red and not able to be budgeted for because of what happens. He wants to make sure that those reforms are happening where states are empowered to do the response, and trained and equipped, and then the Federal government would come in and support them, and financially be there when they need them on their worst day.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you. Because there's many days we really need them. And Mississippi also has a proud legacy of supporting DHS missions across multiple domains from helicopters flown by the Coast Guard and the CBP, to the National Security Cutters and future Polar Security Cutters built in Pascagoula, Mississippi. So, our state plays a central role in helping secure the homeland.

JUSTICE NEXT GEN PROGRAM

But what I would like to highlight today is a wonderful program at Mississippi State University that supports DHS. And as you may be aware, DHS, Justice Next Gen Program at Mississippi State serves an incredibly valuable resource. And the primary mission of this is to serve the operational entities within DHS through research development, testing, integration, and the evaluation of the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), and related technologies to that.

But the Justice program has credited MU with a number of developments that have enhanced the technology and the efficiency for the operational components. So, we're real proud of that. But as we look ahead, I hope that you will view Justice as an important effort. And do you have any thoughts on these programs or similar programs?

Secretary NOEM. Yeah, the Justice program is very important and is being continued going forward. And we recognize the partnership that we've had with so many states in these projects. So, that is something that Department of Homeland Security is very willing and able in the future to partner with you.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Well, it takes so much to make these things successful, but we're really proud of that. And again, thank you for everything you're doing. You are doing an incredible job, and I am thrilled that you are there.

Secretary NOEM. Thank you.

Senator BRITT. Senator Van Hollen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Madam Secretary, it's good to see you.

Secretary NOEM. Good to see you, too.

DHS ACTIONS TO COMPLY WITH SUPREME COURT ORDERS

Senator VAN HOLLEN. And I was glad to see in your recent testimony that you reaffirmed your obligations to uphold the Constitution of the United States. And I understand you had an exchange with Senator Murphy on the Abrego Garcia case. And so, I'm just going to put the question directly to you. Are you or DHS doing anything to comply with the 9–0 Supreme Court order to facilitate his return to the United States? Just yes or no.

Secretary NOEM. This Administration is following all Federal court orders.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Secretary, this is a simple question.

Secretary NOEM. It's the President's prerogative on conversations that happen with the President of El Salvador.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chair, I asked a simple question. You know, we have a limited amount of time. I just asked you, Madam Secretary, whether or not you or the Department of Homeland Security are taking any action to facilitate the 9–0 Supreme Court decision to facilitate his return. This is a very simple question. Are you taking any action to facilitate his return or are you not?

Secretary NOEM. This Administration is following and complying with all Federal court orders to make sure that we are.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So, you are—because the court ordered that you facilitate his return. So, you are facilitating this return.

Secretary NOEM. Senator, thank you for the question. But what I would tell you is that we are following court orders and that your advocacy for a known terrorist is alarming to me.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Secretary—

Secretary NOEM. It's alarming to me because he's a human smuggler and a terrorist, and he's not a U.S. citizen.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Secretary, I'm going to have to reclaim my time.

Secretary NOEM. He's a citizen of El Salvador and he's home. If he were to come back here, we would take him immediately back.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Secretary, you should know a couple facts then, which is, number one, in 2019, the immigration court said that he should not be returned to El Salvador because it would put his life in danger. The Trump Administration at the time did not appeal that decision. After that, he got a work permit and was working legally in the United States of America. This is also why the District Court and the Appellate Court and the Supreme Court have ruled as they have.

I suggest that rather than make these statements here, that you and the Trump Administration make them in court under oath, because despite what you just said, the Federal District Court whose judge is hearing this case right now, said, and I'm quoting, "The administration has provided no evidence linking Abrego Garcia to MS–13 or any other terrorist activity." I'm not vouching for the man. I'm vouching for his due process.

Secretary NOEM. Well, yes you are, sir. You've been vouching for—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. No, no, no, Madam Secretary, with respect—

Secretary NOEM. I would suggest that you defend and stand alongside the victims of the illegal crime on citizens who live here, the United States Americans.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. This is political rhetoric.

Secretary NOEM. I would suggest you advocate for them as hard as you doing for a foreign terrorist.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Secretary, I know you're doing a political speech here. No, I get it.

Secretary NOEM. No, I'm not, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I'm asking questions of law. No, you're just spewing rhetoric.

Secretary NOEM. I truly believe this. I truly believe this an American—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, let me ask you this. Do you agree with Justice Scalia in the Supreme Court opinion in *Reno v. Flores* that I'm quoting, "It is well established that the Fifth Amendment entitles aliens to due process of law in deportation proceedings."

Secretary NOEM. Sir, we are utilizing every due process tool that this Congress has afforded us.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. This is—

Secretary NOEM. The Congress decides what's appropriate for every situation. Expedited removal is a due process that you have afforded us that we are utilizing.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Secretary, I'm going to reclaim my time.

Secretary NOEM. The Alien Enemies Act is another tool that we're utilizing.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Secretary—

Secretary NOEM. So, we're giving due process and giving—using the tools that this Congress has given us.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. This is really—you know, I'm asking sort of simple questions of law and simple questions like I would—are you compliant with a 9–0 Supreme Court decision? And you seem to think that's some kind of trick question.

Let me ask you this. You were down at Center for the Confinement of Terrorism (CECOT) in El Salvador, and you said, and that I'm quoting, "it is one of the tools in the toolkit that we will use." And it's well known that the Trump Administration is paying the government of El Salvador to keep these individuals, including those who the U.S. courts have determined were illegally taken out of the country in violation of their due process rights. Have you seen the grant document between the United States and the government of El Salvador with respect to the CECOT?

Secretary NOEM. It's important that everybody knows the consequences of what happens for their actions in this country. When you break the law and you're a member of a foreign terrorist organization.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Secretary—I asked you a question. Have you seen the document? This is not hard.

Secretary NOEM. Yes, I have.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Okay. And what are the provisions of the doc? So, do you know who, what entities in El Salvador are receiving the funds?

Secretary NOEM. Sir, I'm sure you can see this document as well and have looked at it for evaluations as well.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I'm glad you raised that, Madam Secretary, because I sent you a letter along with many of my colleagues here on April 8th asking for, among other things, that document. Will you respond to the letter that we sent?

Secretary NOEM. I will respond to your letter.

[The information follows:]

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 8, 2025

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

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

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons,

We write to express our concerns regarding the deportation of Kilmar Abrego Garcia to El Salvador, an action which the Administration admitted in a recent court filing was an “administrative error.” It is unacceptable that anyone would be deported without proper due process, especially where an immigration judge has granted the individual protected status that explicitly prohibits his return to El Salvador. We demand that the Administration bring Mr. Abrego Garcia home immediately.

According to court filings, on March 12, 2025, shortly after Mr. Abrego Garcia had picked up his son from the boy’s grandmother’s house, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) stopped Mr. Abrego Garcia, inaccurately telling him that his protected status had changed. After giving his wife a few minutes to arrive to take custody of his son, ICE arrested and detained him without any further explanation as to the reason for his arrest. ICE then transferred Mr. Abrego Garcia and other detainees to Texas, where on March 15, 2025, they were loaded onto planes and deported to El Salvador. Mr. Abrego Garcia was reportedly on the only plane that was not sent under the authority of the Alien Enemies Act but instead was transporting migrants with formal removal orders signed by a judge. This occurred despite the fact that ICE knew, as the Administration conceded in court, that his protected legal status specifically prohibited his removal to El Salvador.

Per court filings, Mr. Abrego Garcia came to the United States in 2011 as a teenager fleeing gang threats in his home country of El Salvador. In 2019, ICE arrested Mr. Abrego Garcia over an unfounded and anonymous allegation that he was involved with MS-13, which placed him in deportation proceedings. The U.S. immigration judge in the case ultimately found that it was in fact Mr. Abrego Garcia who was at risk of being the victim of gang violence. The judge found that Mr. Abrego Garcia and his relatives credibly testified that gang members had been trying to extort his family and recruit him and his brother to join the gang, forcing his family to move multiple times, ultimately compelling both him and his brother to flee to the United States out of fear.

The immigration judge agreed that Mr. Abrego Garcia would likely face persecution if deported back to El Salvador and thus granted him a form of legally mandated protection known as “withholding of removal.” Withholding of removal, which may only be granted by an immigration judge, provided Mr. Abrego Garcia the ability to stay and work in the United States despite being the subject of a deportation order. This ruling was made under the Trump

Administration in 2019 and was in fact required by law under section 241(b)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act once the immigration judge made the factual determination that Mr. Abrego Garcia faced a likelihood of torture in El Salvador. At the time, the Trump Administration made no effort to appeal the judge's ruling or pursue Mr. Abrego Garcia's deportation further. Court filings attest that Mr. Abrego Garcia has complied with regular ICE check-ins, has no criminal charges, and has had no contact with any other law-enforcement agency since his release in 2019.

Mr. Abrego Garcia is currently being held at CECOT, a maximum-security prison in El Salvador notorious for human rights abuses, after being deported in violation of the law to the very country where his return was impermissible.¹ Though the Administration has admitted in court that his deportation was a mistake, it alleges that there is nothing it can do to address this injustice, given that Mr. Abrego Garcia is now in the jurisdiction of the government of El Salvador as part of an agreement to imprison U.S. deportees in exchange for financial compensation.

Your unwillingness to immediately rectify this "administrative error" is unacceptable. Under multiple Democratic and Republican administrations, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and ICE followed the rule of law and worked to quickly return people who were wrongfully deported, in the rare instances where such "administrative errors" occurred. The Administration's mass deportation agenda does not transcend immigration law or the need for due process. And when the Administration makes a mistake as severe as sending an individual with protected status to a foreign prison, it cannot simply shrug off responsibility and allege that there is nothing it can do to reunite him with his wife and child, who are American citizens. On Friday, a U.S. District Court judge in the District of Maryland ordered the government to return Mr. Abrego Garcia to the United States, and on Monday the Fourth Circuit denied the government's motion to stay the order. The Administration should promptly comply with the district court's order.

To address our concerns about this matter and to provide clarity on the Department of Homeland Security and ICE's policy regarding the immigration enforcement actions against immigrants with protected status, we ask that your Administration answer the following questions by April 22, 2025:

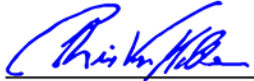
1. The standard and legal course for the government to take to deport someone with protected status would be to reopen the case, introduce evidence that grounds for terminating the protected status exist, and then allow an immigration judge to make a determination as to their status. Why was that course of action not taken in this case?
2. In the past, DHS and ICE worked to quickly return people to the U.S. who were erroneously deported. Why is DHS and ICE no longer following these well-established procedures and practices?
3. Vice President J.D. Vance and Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt have both claimed that Mr. Abrego Garcia is an MS-13 gang member, but the government was unable or unwilling to provide any evidence to substantiate that claim to the court. Please provide any evidence of Mr. Abrego Garcia's membership in MS-13.

¹ 8 U.S.C. § 1231(b)(3)(A)

4. Given that the Administration is reportedly paying \$6 million to El Salvador to detain deported immigrants at CECOT, why does it believe that there is nothing it can do to return Mr. Abrego Garcia to his family in the United States? Please provide a copy of the agreement between the U.S. and El Salvador on the detention of people deported from the U.S. in CECOT.
5. Are there any other cases that the Administration is aware of in which an immigrant with protected status was illegally deported without due process? If so, identify those cases and explain what, if anything the government is doing to rectify those errors.
6. Will the Administration commit to reviewing all of the cases of its deportees to ensure that it has appropriately identified all of the errors?
7. What actions will the Administration take in the future to ensure that immigrants with protected status are afforded their appropriate due process?

We appreciate your prompt attention to this vital matter and look forward to reviewing your fulsome, timely response.

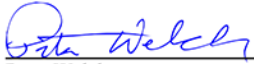
Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



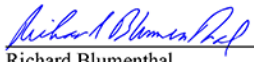
Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



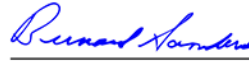
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



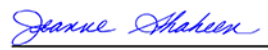
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Senate
Foreign Relations Committee



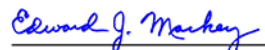
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



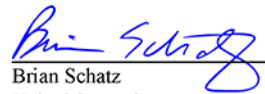
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



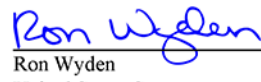
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



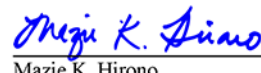
Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator


 Jeffrey A. Merkley
 United States Senator


 Angela Alsobrooks
 United States Senator


 Jack Reed
 United States Senator


 Gary C. Peters
 United States Senator


 Amy Klobuchar
 United States Senator

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Can I get some sense of when? Secretary NOEM. We will take a look at it? I don't remember seeing your letter yet, but I will certainly take a look.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, it's been there over a month.

Senator BRITT. The Senator's time has expired.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. No, Madam Chair.

Senator BRITT. Senator Kennedy.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Madam Chair.

Senator KENNEDY. Madam Secretary—

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I have some additional questions related—

Senator BRITT. No, sir. That's up to you to manage that time. Senator Kennedy.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, I need a little help from a chair that respects the members of the committee. I'm sorry, Chair, this is—

Senator KENNEDY. Madam Secretary—You pretty much secured the Southern border, haven't you?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, sir. The CBP, they certainly have.

Senator KENNEDY. And that upsets some of my colleagues, doesn't it?

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator KENNEDY. They say you've done it the wrong way, haven't they?

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator KENNEDY. Could you answer that?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, sir. They do say that.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you think they're upset because you supposedly did it the wrong way or you think they're upset that you did it at all?

Secretary NOEM. I think they're upset that by President Trump enforcing the law. It happened so quickly and successfully.

Senator KENNEDY. Yeah. Now, when President Biden came into office, the first thing he did was get rid of all of the things we were doing to stop people from coming into our country illegally, didn't he?

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator KENNEDY. I mean, he—it was like, “The price is right. Come on down.” Except he said, “Come on in.” And most of my Democrat colleagues went along with that, didn't they?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, they did.

Senator KENNEDY. In fact, they cheered him on, didn't they?

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator KENNEDY. Is that a yes?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, sir.

Senator KENNEDY. How many people do you think President Biden let into our country illegally? Just give me a ballpark figure.

Secretary NOEM. Sir, we don't know for certain, but we believe it could be upwards to 20 million people that are illegally in this country.

Senator KENNEDY. So, that's like adding 10 Nebraska's to our country, isn't it?

Secretary NOEM. That's correct.

Senator KENNEDY. Why do you think President Biden and my Democratic colleagues did that? Do you think they believe in open borders?

SENATOR KENNEDY'S REMARKS ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Secretary NOEM. I think they believed in open borders and letting people come into this country that would affect our society and criminals. Those other countries emptying out the worst of the worst, their mental institutions, their prisons came in here and jeopardized—and known terrorists.

Senator KENNEDY. Well, one or two circumstances are possible. It seems to me either President Biden and the Democrats who supported him believe in open borders, or the people that President Biden put in charge of securing the border you wouldn't trust to run a snowball stand, right?

Secretary NOEM. That is correct.

Senator KENNEDY. So, nobody is that incompetent. So, it has to be open—they just believe in open borders, do they not?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, because I know the people who were securing the border and they weren't allowed to do their job.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you think they believe that vetting people at the border is racist?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, I do. I think by the way they allowed people in and granted them immediate parole status.

Senator KENNEDY. Do you think that President Biden and some of my Democratic colleagues, I don't want to paint with too broad a brush, Madam Secretary, thought of these foreign nationals in our country illegally as potential new voters.

Secretary NOEM. I do, sir.

Senator KENNEDY. Okay. If you're an ordinary American and you oppose illegal immigration, but you support legal immigration, does that make you a racist?

Secretary NOEM. No, sir. Not at all. It just means that you believe there should be a rule of law, and that's what America was built on.

Senator KENNEDY. And that's what you've been enforcing. Right?

Secretary NOEM. Exactly. We have been following the Constitution and the rule of law in this country.

Senator KENNEDY. And I want to be sure I understand, because there's been a lot of confusing testimony here. You've secured the border, have you not?

Secretary NOEM. This administration has, yes, sir.

Senator KENNEDY. And some of my colleagues are upset with you.

Secretary NOEM. Yes, sir.

Senator KENNEDY. And they say you did it wrong?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, sir.

Senator KENNEDY. And do you agree with me that what they're really upset about is that you did it at all?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, sir.

FEDERAL JUDICIARY

Senator KENNEDY. Okay. I want to ask you a last question about our Federal judiciary. I've said repeatedly that all of us have a moral and a civic obligation to follow Federal orders. And I stand by that. But there have been a lot of national injunctions, universal injunctions, issued to try to stop you from doing your job. Where were these judges when people were breaking law, and coming into our country and illegally? Were any of them speaking up and issuing national injunctions against the Democrats?

Secretary NOEM. I don't believe I can be specific about every single judge. But these judges that now are trying to stop us from enforcing our laws, I don't believe or recall them being vocal then.

Senator KENNEDY. Can you think being vocal then, Madam Secretary, of one single solitary Federal judge who when President Biden and my Democratic colleagues, not all of them, but many of them.

Senator MURPHY. Chair, his time expired.

Senator KENNEDY. Senator Murray went on over about two minutes. So, I'm going to take a minute.

Senator MURPHY. Well, Senator Van Hollen just got shut down right under his—

Senator BRITT. Yes, if you can finish your question.

Senator KENNEDY. Can you recall one single solitary Federal judge when President Biden and my Democratic colleagues were letting 20 million people come into the country illegally?

Secretary NOEM. I don't recall.

Senator KENNEDY. Can you think of one single solitary judge issued national injunction.

Senator MURPHY. That is more than one question. Stop them.

Secretary NOEM. No, I can't recall.

Senator KENNEDY. I can't either. If there weren't for double standards there wouldn't be—

Senator MURPHY. Madam Chair.

Senator BRITT. Thank you, Senator Kennedy. Senator Peters.

Senator MURPHY. Madam Chair, let me just say, let's apply the rules fairly. Senator Van Hollen was asking tough questions, but was shut down pretty immediately when his time was expired. Can we at least have a commitment, Madam Chair, that Senators on this committee will be allowed to submit questions for the record?

Senator BRITT. Absolutely.

Senator MURPHY. And that you'll ask the secretary to answer those questions?

Senator BRITT. Yes, absolutely.

Senator BRITT. Absolutely, yes. Senator Peters.

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. Secretary Noem, good to see you again.

Secretary NOEM. Good to see you, too.

NORTHERN BORDER MISSION CENTER

Senator PETERS. Secretary, I certainly appreciated your commitment during your confirmation hearing before my committee on fully staffing the Gordy Howie International Bridge between Detroit and Canada. As you know, one of the busiest border crossings in all of North America. It's scheduled to open this fall. It's going to be a big deal. But my question for you is, how are preparations going for the opening of that bridge? Obviously, your department will play a big role in in that opening.

Secretary NOEM. Yes. We're excited about it. We're thankful that the construction has been completed and that it's working well. And we're excited to coming up there and having the celebration with you.

Senator PETERS. Do you have the resources and personnel in place now?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, we do.

Senator PETERS. Good. I also appreciated your commitment to fully building out the Northern Border Mission Center, which will be located at Ridge International Guard Base to coordinate all that goes along the northern border. How is the build out of that center progressing place?

Secretary NOEM. It's going well. It's on track. I haven't heard of anything that has been delayed. And I can get you a more detailed update though, if you would like one.

Senator PETERS. I would if we could follow-up that'd be great after this hearing, I would appreciate that.

As ranking member of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee (HSGAC), I have sent you nine letters since you have been sworn in as Secretary of Homeland Security. So far, I've received only two replies. And quite frankly, one of those was completely unsatisfactory. And while I understand you've had a busy start, you have a lot on your plate, including travel, responses to Congressional oversight requests are a priority. And I think you hold that view, but we're not seeing it being demonstrated, unfortunately.

So, my question for you is, when can I expect responses to these letters, and can you commit to getting me responses, certainly, before our budget hearing, before HSGAC coming up?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, absolutely, sir. I was unaware that you had that many letters out yet. I know some of the letters you requested had a lot of data to gather and information.

Senator PETERS. Yes.

Secretary NOEM. And so, that may be the delay on a couple of them. But we will get those gathered and get them to you. As you know, when I came into this role, we had a backlog of letters from Senators and Congressmen up to 4 years, where the previous Administration did not respond to any of you. That was a universal complaint I had from Republicans and Democrats.

Senator PETERS. Well, we want to see that change. So—yes, if we could get these letters back as quickly as possible, I'd appreciate that.

Secretary NOEM. I bet.

CISA'S MISSION

Senator PETERS. As you know, Madam Secretary, Congress spent years creating CISA clarifying its mission and ensuring that the agency can employ the most skilled Federal employees to protect our Federal cyber networks and critical infrastructure from attacks.

During your confirmation process, you stated that you wanted to get CISA back on-mission, but quite frankly, you were very light on specifics of what that actually meant. Now that you've been in your position for several months, could you explain to us in detail what getting CISA back on its mission means? And I mean, with some specificity, which offices and programs at CISA do you consider to be off-mission, and which ones do you consider to be on-mission?

Secretary NOEM. Well, as you know, CISA under the last Administration got involved in being somewhat of the role of the Ministry of Truth. They were defining what was misinformation, disinformation. They were out doing election security missions, what were censorship, and deciding what was truth and what wasn't truth.

And we have eliminated those functions within CISA. CISA was created to be an entity that supported small and medium businesses, and also critical infrastructure.

Senator PETERS. Yes.

Secretary NOEM. Our electrical grid, our water systems in that are vulnerable to hacking attempts and influence from foreign countries, but enemies of the United States of America. So we are building out to those.

Senator PETERS. And I agree with all those. I just got limited time here. I agree with all that. And that is the central focus that it has to continue. But I want to clarify because you talked about misinformation. I've heard this a lot.

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator PETERS. Certainly, I don't want to have any agency putting out misinformation, but CISA had 15 full-time employees assigned to countering misinformation. That's 15 employees out of 3,000 employees that work at CISA. And my understanding, and I think you mentioned it, those 15 people are not doing that anymore. So, is CISA still not on-mission? Is it still—

Secretary NOEM. It's getting there. We don't have our Senate-confirmed leader of CISA yet. We're looking forward to that and the President's cybersecurity—

Senator PETERS. But that doesn't have to do with mission. I mean, we—why is it not performing a mission? Because my frustration is that—

Secretary NOEM. Why is what?

Senator PETERS. Why do you say it's off-mission if the unit that was doing that is gone?

Secretary NOEM. Yes, it's back on-mission. But we still have silos to break down between our intelligence agencies. We still have communication systems that have to be built so we can share information.

I shared during my confirmation hearing that one of the most alarming things to me that I happened to learn, was that when Salt Typhoon and Volt Typhoon happened, that we knew we'd been hacked. We knew who we'd been hacked by, but we had no idea how to stop it. And so, building those relationships with the private sector to help us go out there, and really get the information that we need to get the technology and expertise to get in front of those bad actors that would infiltrate our systems, I think is incredibly important.

So making sure that we have those partnerships with us. Sharing information, and advice, and wisdom on how to stop these hackers before they steal our critical information is very, very important. You know better than anybody, better than I do even, that we have 10 of the 16 critical infrastructure components under the Department of Homeland Security. So this is a top priority of President Trump.

Senator PETERS. So it is on-mission now? CISA is on-mission?

Secretary NOEM. It is.

Senator PETERS. Great. Thank you.

Senator BRITT. Thank you, Senator Peters. Senator Murkowski.

INCREASES TO COAST GUARD'S TOPLINE

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome Secretary. I know you had an opportunity to take a quick trip up to Kodiak to see our Coast Guard men and women there. Thank you for that. I'm pleased to see the focus from the administration with regards to the Coast Guard within the reconciliation package. It is significant, it is meaningful.

As I'm looking though at the skinny budget that we have here, I'm wondering whether or not the administration's budget request increases the Coast Guard's top line, because as important as it is to do, what we're doing in reconciliation. We want to make sure that the service has the sustained funding and support that it deserves in annual appropriation. So, I don't know, if you want to speak quickly to that.

Secretary NOEM. Well, yes, Senator, it is. We're building out the Coast Guard into the future. We have a request in for 15,000 more individuals that would come in and be a part of the organization. So it's not just the investment in the cutters, which we discussed as well as, you know, airframe that's been grounded because it needs to be replaced and we can no longer repair it. It is also build-

ing out the amount of support that we have as far as individuals and components.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I want to ask about not just the ships, the cutters, the airframes, but the people, and where those people live. It was several commandants ago. It was Commandant Zukunft, who promised that Kodiak Seward Sitka Ketchikan, they were going to get these fast response cutters. Well, the FRCs are out there, but what hasn't come through is the shoreside infrastructure upgrades. Sitka and Seward continue to be left hanging. And so, the ships that were due to come to them are being parked in in other communities.

I mean, we are not only 1 year off, 2 years off, multiple years off. So this is something that I have raised with you, and I'm hopeful that we're finally going to be able to make that commitment to make sure that when you've got the ships, you've got the home port.

Secretary NOEM. Right.

BENEFITS FOR COAST GUARD

Senator MURKOWSKI. And when it comes to the home port, I think you saw in Kodiak, it's not just the housing, it is the childcare, it's the medical options. And so, I'm hoping that as we're looking at this revitalization of the Coast Guard, that is so overdue, and I so appreciate the focus that the administration is placing on this, that it really is this whole package.

Secretary NOEM. Right.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Yes, absolutely. And when on Force Design 2028, I'll get you the details on that, so you can see that that infrastructure is being addressed. And that was one of the things that was discussed quite extensively when I was up there with the Coasties and folks that we're serving, was how challenging it was——

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator MURKOWSKI [continuing]. to be in a remote area, not have the access to basic needs that they have for their family as well, especially medical care and specialized medical care. So, it is big. So, I'm glad you, you had an opportunity to see that.

WORK AUTHORIZATIONS FOR IMMIGRANTS

I want to shift here with regards to parole and temporary protected status. We have a relatively significant population of immigrants in Alaska that are under parole, or TPS, or both. They're small, but for us, they're meaningful in our communities. It's the Ukrainians. We have Afghanis, Venezuelans, we have some Haitians. The majority of these folks are just truly valued members of their new community. They're helping us meet workforce needs and really contributing to the tax base here.

They've expressed great concern about their status and work authorizations that may be revoked or allowed to expire. So USCIS hasn't processed re-parole TPS renewals or work authorizations for the Ukrainians, at least for almost 5 months. And the concern is they have paid the fees to USCIS to process their applications, and yet they're not seeing any action on this.

Can you share with me, share with the committee, any information on when this pause might end? There are so many that are concerned that the work authorizations will expire while they're waiting for this process.

Secretary NOEM. Yes. We do have several countries that have been evaluated by the Administration on their participation in TPS. And the program, as it was established, was meant to be utilized on a temporary basis. So, some of these TPS programs have been in place for many, many years. But the evaluation on why TPS should be utilized and when it can be utilized by a country is the process that the Administration's going through.

So if it's a conflict, environmental, economic concern, something that's going on, and you talked specifically about the Ukrainians as well. I will say that that program is still there and being evaluated. But those folks may have gotten an email or something that was not correct and was rectified. So I know some folks were alarmed by that, that they received, but we did rectify that. And that was sent out if their legal status had changed, you know, it certainly did not apply to them. And we communicated that with them as well.

The one thing I will say is that anyone who is on a program like this, or on parole that has been revoked, always has the opportunity to apply for asylum as well. And so, that is the application that we are forwarding in many of these instances across the country from different countries that interact with us through these different programs.

Senator MURKOWSKI. And again, just the timing of an expiration, of the work authorization while they're waiting. So as much information as you can share, and I'm sure other states as well. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator BRITT. Thank you very much. Senator Van Hollen.

FIREFIGHTER GRANTS

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Secretary, I'm going to ask you about something I hope we can agree on. Are you familiar with the U.S. Fire Academy? It trains about 100,000 firefighters from around the country.

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So right now, as you may know, it's not being funded. All the in-person classes have been canceled. So I, together with some of my colleagues, including Congresswoman April McClain Delaney, who represents that district in Congress, wrote to you back on March 14th about the situation there. I would just ask, could you commit today to responding to our letter?

Secretary NOEM. I believe we did respond even if it may have just been recently to you. But those grants and programs are being facilitated, and those dollars will be forwarded. So that is something that if I didn't get that back to you, we will get it to you within 24 hours.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, that would be some good news to come out of the hearing, because we really have not heard a thing I'm reading from a headline, "Trump Officials Silent as Firefighters Lobby to Reopen Training Academy in Maryland." This is an article

from yesterday. So you're bringing good news today that we're going to renew funding for the National Fire Academy?

Secretary NOEM. That is the direction that we are taking, and we will get that information to you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Secretary. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator BRITT. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen. Senator Hagerty.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Madam Chair. And Secretary, it's great to see you again.

Secretary NOEM. Good to see you, too.

SENATOR HAGERTY'S REMARKS ON THE BORDER

Senator HAGERTY. I really want to thank you and President Trump, and all the men of the Border Patrol and ICE, for the incredible amount of work that has gone on in a very short period of time to secure the border. It's made a huge difference in my home state. It's going to continue to make a difference, I'm certain.

And I very much appreciate your efforts to bring these illegal aliens to justice as well. President Trump promised to deliver the most secure border in American history, and the two of you have delivered on that promise. Encounters at the Southwest Border are down 95 percent, and under the Trump Administration gotaways are down 99 percent. Congratulations on that.

The Trump Administration has ended the crisis that the previous administration created at the Southwest Border, and you've done it, frankly, in a matter of weeks. My colleagues, and certainly, President Biden, argued that we needed new legislation to address the situation at the Southern Border. I think what you've demonstrated is that was absolutely not the case.

I'd like for you, if you would, Secretary Noem, to paint a picture for us. How was it your first day when you arrived at the agency? What sort of state of affairs did you walk into? I want the public to understand how poorly managed the situation was that you've taken on.

Secretary NOEM. Well, Senator, thank you for the question. I would say that, overwhelmingly, it was a night and day difference as soon as President Trump was sworn into office, because immediately the message was sent out to everyone who worked in the Department of Homeland Security that we were now going to enforce the law in the United States of America, that we were going to be able to let people do their jobs, which had been so frustrating for so many of our CBP and ICE officers.

And those who partnered with them they felt as though they had been facilitating an invasion of our country. And the fact they grew up in these communities. Many of these officers were raised in Del Rio, and El Paso, and Tucson, and they were, you know, just devastated by what the change they had seen.

So, the fact that they got to do their jobs again was overwhelmingly, I believe, why this was a success in securing our border, knowing who comes into this country and stopping those who shouldn't.

President Trump, what I'm proud of is that he has removed 252 known terrorists from our country just since he's been in office. Thousands of criminals and illegal aliens that have perpetuated vi-

olence on our communities. And I think the employees and the officers that are a part of the Department of Homeland Security are proud to be a part of the solution that's making America very safe again.

INVASION OF THE UNITED STATES

Senator HAGERTY. Can I stay with a comment that you made or a term that you used, "invasion"?

Secretary NOEM. Yes.

Senator HAGERTY. Because what we saw over the prior 4 years was the largest invasion of our country that we've ever seen. I don't think the American public understands this because it was obfuscated in the media. But could you just break down for us and explain to us how the Biden Administration facilitated the invasion of over 10 million people illegally entering this country in 4 years?

Secretary NOEM. Yeah, absolutely. Their lack of enforcement of our laws and their policies facilitated people being welcomed into our country, telegraphed around the world that come to America. The borders are open when you get there. Someone will give you asylum, you'll be protected. We'll give you housing, and food, and free medical care. Billions of dollars spent by taxpayers to give them more advantages than what the average United States American citizen gets. That was very clearly telegraphed by their policies. And it devastated so many of our communities.

I think most people also recognize that when you welcome people from around the world, you're going to get bad actors, too. You're going to get cartel members taking advantage of the situation. Terrorist organizations that are going to infiltrate our country. People who have been kicked out of their own countries for reasons that their country would not tolerate. They came here to find a safe haven, and Joe Biden gave them that opportunity.

So, you know, it is going to be a big job to clean up the mess that they created. But President Trump is determined to do so, and overwhelmingly, the American people support him in that. They are so thrilled to get these dangerous people off of their streets.

When I've been out working with the frontline individuals in the Department of Homeland Security, with our officers with those that are emergency responders, you can be in New York City, you can be in San Diego, you can be anywhere, and people that are walking their kids to school in the morning are walking by the operations, going, "Thank you. Thank you for being here."

RESOURCES NEEDED FOR BORDER SECURITY

Senator HAGERTY. One last point. The situation in my home state, we are losing about 3,000 kids a year to fentanyl, to overdoses. We've got human trafficking happening from Memphis, to Nashville, and beyond. And I really want to know, I think the American people expect that this border will be secured, that we can get this stopped. But what resources do you need to make that happen that you don't have today?

Secretary NOEM. Well, you've seen the request from President Trump in reconciliation and in his fiscal year budget. You know, he is doing due diligence to make sure we have the resources that

we need to really secure our border, but also to make sure that we are stopping this poison in our communities.

It's giving us enforcement tools, more officers out there, more agreements. You've seen us implement 287(g) with local law enforcement officers and state law enforcement officers that will compound our efforts out on the ground, give us more individuals to clean up the mess.

But we also need the technology at our ports to scan packages that come into this country. We've collected, I think, over \$36 billion worth of tariffs against other countries because of what President Trump is doing to make sure that we're putting jobs back in the United States of America. But CBP is the ones that are collecting those tariffs, but they also need at our ports of entry scanning technology so we know what's coming in, in packages, what's coming in by air freight, that we just haven't been doing due diligence under the Joe Biden Administration to really know what the threats are, and how those dangerous chemicals and poisons are coming in.

Senator BRITT. Thank you, Senator Hagerty. For the last round of questions. Senator Murphy.

SPENDING MONEY UNDER SSP

Senator MURPHY. Thank you. Madam Secretary, one of the accounts that right now is being impounded, I mentioned it in my opening statement, is the Shelter and Services Program. I certainly understand that as a program, that Republicans unfortunately have not supported, but it was a major element of the budget that we passed. And thus far there are, you know, somewhere in the neighborhood of \$600 million that you have not expended.

Can you commit to this committee, understanding that you have the ability to decide how that money is spent and who gets that money within the parameters dictated by Congress, but can you commit to this committee that you are going to spend the money in the Shelter and Services account according to the authorization provided to you by Congress?

Secretary NOEM. Sir, we have followed authorizations and the law on how these dollars are being spent. We are not conducting any impoundment. And as you know, under the previous administration, the Shelter and Services Program was being used to facilitate illegal immigration and shelter for criminals in many areas. And so, we are using those dollars to how they were intended by Congress when those dollars were put into that program.

Senator MURPHY. But you haven't spent really any of those dollars other than those that you've reprogrammed. So, you and I certainly understand that you do have a right to spend a little bit of time on review, but you do have to spend those dollars. And so, can you commit to us that you are going to spend the dollars in the Shelter and Services Program on the functionalities and programmatic parameters authorized by Congress?

Secretary NOEM. We're going to follow the authorities that we have under the Department of Homeland Security and the Administration for how Congress appropriates funds. Absolutely, we will follow what is authorized and what is the process for how those are traditionally spent.

Senator MURPHY. Madam Chair, my guess is that the Administration is not going to spend any of the SSP dollars. That by the end of the year, those dollars will not be spent. And I raised this issue because I admit that this was a priority for Democrats, and that money was included in the budget in exchange for other funds that were priorities for Republicans. If we now live in a world in which the Administration spends down the accounts that were priorities for Republicans and does not spend down the priorities that were priorities for Democrats, I don't know how we do a budget.

I don't actually know how we come to an agreement if we live in a world in which the Administration doesn't spend the accounts that it doesn't believe in. That would be precedent-breaking for this Congress. And so, I raised this issue because I think it's very relevant to our work, and I think it will make it virtually impossible for us to do a bipartisan budget if by the end of this fiscal year, the \$600 million that are sitting in this account that are supposed to be used to treat migrants to this country, humanely are not used. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator BRITT. Thank you, Senator Murphy. And we have about six minutes left on the vote. So, I'm going to make my last round quick.

CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS

I want to talk to you a little bit about the Center for Domestic Preparedness. It's the preeminent institution when it comes to training and equipping emergency managers and first responders. I certainly appreciate the Department's efforts to increase the capacity of our state, local, territorial, and tribal partners to better handle disasters, to respond to civil unrest, and to keep cities safe and secure with impending events like the World Cup, Olympics future Super Bowl, et cetera.

I want to make sure that we get this training back up and going. My question to you is, when can we expect these classes to be turned back on, and will there be any remedy for classes that were canceled?

Secretary NOEM. Yes. We'll work with you, Senator to see what we can do for rescheduling classes, and that funding will be continued, and it'll be a priority of the Department of Homeland Security into the future.

Senator BRITT. Excellent. Thank you so much. Madam Secretary, we will go ahead and wrap this up. Thank you so much for being here today. I know that we can obviously disagree on policy across this dais, but we certainly agree that we want to make sure that we get timely responses.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

And on that note, for closing, we will have questions for the record, will be submitted and then due on May 15th, so seven days from now.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO HON. KRISTI NOEM

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI

Question. USCIS has not processed re-paroles, TPS renewals, work authorizations, or any other immigration status-change applications for Ukrainians for almost 5 months. Unless they received a waiver, individuals in Alaska paid fees to USCIS to process their applications, and yet, no action is being taken. Can you tell me when this pause will end?

Answer. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is committed to keeping America safe by strengthening the integrity of the immigration system, including improving the detection and prevention of fraud and abuse across our programs and identifying threats to national security and public safety. Due to vetting concerns that arose in the previous Administration, USCIS placed an administrative hold on benefits requests filed by aliens who are or were paroled into the United States under Uniting for Ukraine. Pursuant to court order in *Doe v. Noem*, Case No. 1:25-cv-10495-IT (D. Mass.), that hold has now been lifted. All benefit requests are reviewed with the appropriate screening and vetting standards and procedures as set out in Executive Order 14161. Between May 28, 2025 when the court order was issued, and June 30, 2025, USCIS adjudicated 8,855 benefit requests filed by aliens who are or were paroled into the United States under Uniting for Ukraine; the parole programs for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans; and the Family Reunification Parole processes.

Question. Particularly for individuals in Alaska under parole only, with pending applications for re-parole, I am concerned their parole will expire and thus, so will their authorization to work, through no fault of their own. What is the Department doing to ensure these individuals can continue to work while they wait for their re-parole applications to be processed?

Answer. Pursuant to Executive Order 14159 and Executive Order 14165, "Securing Our Borders," DHS will ensure that its parole authority under section 212(d)(5)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act is exercised in accordance with the plain language of the statute and that all future parole determinations fully comply with applicable law. This parole authority will only be exercised on a case-by-case basis, and in all circumstances, only when an alien demonstrates urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit derived from his or her individual circumstances and demonstrates that he or she warrants a favorable exercise of discretion. Regardless of whether an alien has submitted an application for re-parole, aliens whose period of parole is expiring must comply with United States laws and plan to depart the United States by the time their parole period expires unless they have a separate basis to lawfully remain in the United States.

Question. USCIS has long been backlogged-as evidenced by the recent rule increasing the time period for automatic extension of work authorizations when TPS renewals are pending from 180 days to 540 days. What is being done to ensure that individuals who entered the U.S. legally and are attempting to remain here legally-either under a temporary program or more permanently through asylum, which you specifically mentioned at the hearing-will be allowed to live and work in the U.S. while the backlog is processed?

Answer. DHS is committed to ensuring that only those aliens who qualify for immigration benefits receive them. Benefits like Temporary Protected Status and asylum, along with their corresponding Employment Authorization Document application, will no longer be abused by those with no legal basis to be in the United States. Regarding existing backlogs, DHS seeks to ensure that applications and petitions are processed as efficiently and expeditiously as possible consistent with applicable statutes, regulations and current policy.

Question. H-2B workers are vital to fill United States workforce needs when domestic workers do not want the jobs. For example, the seafood industry in Alaska and in States across the country has long depended on H-2B workers to process fish and other seafood. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in workforce problems across industries and the H-2B program is now completely oversubscribed. For Fiscal Year 2025, the cap for the first half of the year was reached before the fiscal year even started (on September 18, 2024). Recognizing the importance of this program to the United States economy, Homeland Security Appropriations legislation has long-carried language giving the Secretary discretionary authority to issue supplemental H-2B visas in an amount that essentially doubles cap. Do you support the H-2B visa program, and do you commit to issue the maximum allowable number of supplemental visas if demand continues to require it?

Answer. If Congress again grants authority to issue supplemental H-2B visas, the Department of Homeland Security will commit to consulting with the Department

of Labor to determine whether there is a labor market need and if so, the appropriate number of supplemental visas to ensure that American businesses are equipped with the resources they need, while protecting against adverse impacts on the wages and working conditions of United States workers. DHS believes that Congress has the best understanding of the needs of local constituents and can make changes to the statutory H-2B cap prescribed in the Immigration and Nationality Act accordingly.

Question. I am continuing to lead a bipartisan effort to exempt seafood processors from the H-2B visa caps. These are traditional users of the program and they are being shut out because they have no control over when fish need to be processed. For example, this year, seafood processors in Alaska were entirely dependent on supplemental visas for pollock A season, which starts in January, because the regular cap was reached before they could even apply for workers. Do you support my legislation?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security believes that Congress is best placed to determine the needs of local constituents and to make informed decisions to adjust the H-2B program accordingly.

Question. In the Department's announcement of the FEMA Review Council, you stated that the Council's goal is to advise "on the existing ability of FEMA to capably and impartially address disasters occurring within the United States and shall advise the President on all recommended changes related to FEMA to best serve the National interest." Recently in Alaska, we have experienced declared major disasters including typhoons, landslides, and glacial outburst flooding. Right now, we have the Mount Spurr Volcano near Anchorage threatening to erupt. Yet, when I saw the list of the people appointed to this council, I noticed that not only is there no one from Alaska, but there is very limited representation from the Western States. Will you commit to appointing new members to this board to address all of our States, especially considering Alaska has one of the highest rates of disaster per capita, with 55 federally declared disasters since 1953, 19 of those since 2015?

Answer. The President has said that Americans deserve an immediate, effective, and impartial response to and recovery from disasters. I wholeheartedly agree. To achieve this goal, on January 24, 2025, the President established the Federal Emergency Management Agency Review Council through Executive Order 14180. The Council is composed of individuals highly experienced at effective disaster response and recovery, including expertise in disaster relief and assistance, emergency preparedness, natural disasters, Federal-State relationships, and budget management.

Upon its establishment, the Council requested feedback from emergency management subject matter experts and from the public during a public comment period. Further, the Secretary also sent a letter to the Council of Governors, to include the State of Alaska, requesting their input and recommendations. I look forward to receiving and reviewing the State of Alaska's feedback and recommendations on how the Federal Emergency Management Agency's operations can be improved for effectiveness while also providing taxpayers a cost savings. I am proud to co-lead this Council with Secretary of Defense Hegseth. I assure you that the Council will meet the President's intent and produce a robust report with actionable recommendations.

Question. The termination of the FEMA BRIC program has put many communities across the Nation in difficult positions. Many of these projects are not political and are a part of FEMA's core mission, which prioritizes preparing for potential catastrophe before, during, and after disasters. For example, the City of Skagway, Alaska was awarded a \$20 million BRIC grant to mitigate impending rockslides above its busiest dock in the port. I do not believe preventing dangerous rockslides from falling onto a port is wasteful, and projects like Skagway's in fact save Federal funds by investing in communities before a disaster strikes. Do you believe disaster mitigation is an important part of FEMA's mission, and do you think rescinding already awarded funds to reduce disasters—which has been shown to save the taxpayer money—is an effective way to restore the Nation's trust in FEMA?

Answer. The Department and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are evaluating ways to improve the delivery of hazard mitigation assistance to ensure it is more responsive, timely, and aligned with the needs of States and communities.

Question. The National Fire Academy's mission is to provide training courses and advanced management programs for middle- and top-level fire officers, fire service instructors, technical professionals, and representatives from allied professions. These students are drawn from all 50 States and represent the wide breadth of the American fire service, including both volunteer and career firefighters. Critically, the training offered by NFA is specialized training, similar to the leadership training offered by the military war colleges for current and future military officers. Just as these military institutions prepare leaders to handle complex, high-stakes situa-

tions, the NFA equips fire and emergency services personnel with the advanced knowledge and leadership capabilities necessary to effectively manage critical incidents and organizational challenges. Training provided by the academy is not otherwise available in my state, and many of Alaska's firefighting personnel utilize the Academy every year. Given the importance of NFA to training fire service personnel from all around the country and helping to ensure nation-wide readiness, when do you anticipate the NFA campus will be reopened?

Answer. In-person training has resumed at three national schoolhouses in June 2025-the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama and the National Fire Academy and the National Disaster and Emergency Management University in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Following a comprehensive review by FEMA and the U.S. Fire Administration, it was determined certain courses provide effective training to enhance national readiness for State, local, Tribal, and territorial emergency managers, first responders and local leaders. FEMA's principles for emergency management assert that disasters are best managed when they are federally supported, state managed, and locally executed.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR SUSAN M. COLLINS

Question. The most recent Disaster Relief Fund monthly report indicates a projected shortfall for fiscal year 2025 of nearly \$13 billion. And this does not account for storms that will occur during the upcoming hurricane season. Even if you move around funding from various programs to boost the balance in the fund, the issue will not be resolved. If the Disaster Relief Fund does not receive supplemental funds, when do you anticipate the need to implement Immediate Needs Funding?

Answer. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund Majors, which is projecting a \$6.9 billion shortfall, expects to run out of money in August. This calculation is based on Fiscal Year 2024 actual and Fiscal Year 2025 projected obligations, plus a \$3 billion reserve for an unanticipated catastrophic event.

FEMA's top priorities are: meeting disaster survivors' immediate needs and ensuring that States, Tribes, and territories have the necessary resources to respond to disasters. For Fiscal Year 2025, FEMA is projecting a \$6.9 billion shortfall in the Disaster Relief Fund Majors, excluding reserve funding for a future catastrophic event, which brings the total need to \$10.0 billion. There are multiple factors driving the estimated shortfall, including continued recovery for Hurricanes Helene, Milton, Maria, and the California Wildfires; COVID-19 reimbursements, which include reimbursements to state, Tribal, territorial, or local governments for emergency protective measures for the COVID-19 disaster (i.e. COVID testing, alternative care sites, and medical support), and reimbursements to individuals and families for eligible COVID-19 funeral expenses; and recent disaster response and recovery efforts. To mitigate this risk, FEMA has prioritized identifying and recovering excess or unused funds from previously obligated contracts, grants, and mission assignments, recovering more than \$4.8 billion as of May 2025.

Current Disaster Relief Fund funding levels are adequate to enable immediate response and recovery to any incidents that may occur and continue ongoing disaster activities; however, if the Disaster Relief Fund approaches a critical threshold, FEMA will work with the Department and the Administration and take necessary steps to ensure funding is available to support both critical ongoing disaster operations and provide a reserve for initial response and recovery activities for a future significant event.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CINDY HYDE-SMITH

Question. From the night of March 14 through March 15, 2025, at least 20 Mississippi counties endured extreme weather conditions, including hurricane-force winds, baseball-sized hail, 18 tornadoes, and flash flooding. A magnitude 3.0 earthquake also struck near Magee, Mississippi, during the storms. Tragically, seven Mississippians lost their lives, and the storms caused extensive damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure. FEMA-validated reports indicate at least \$18.2 million in damages, including 233 homes destroyed and 208 homes with major damage. Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves has requested a Federal disaster declaration, including Individual Assistance for the following 14 counties: Carroll, Covington, Grenada, Holmes, Issaquena, Itawamba, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Leflore, Marion,

Montgomery, Pike, Smith, and Walthall. The request also includes Public Assistance for the following 17 counties: Calhoun, Carroll, Covington, Grenada, Humphreys, Issaquena, Itawamba, Jefferson Davis, Lee, Leflore, Marion, Pike, Prentiss, Sharkey, Smith, Walthall, and Washington.

On April 2, 2025, the Mississippi congressional delegation sent a letter of support endorsing Governor Reeves's request for an expedited major disaster declaration and Individual Assistance. Could you provide an update on the status of this request and the anticipated timeline for a decision on a Federal Disaster Declaration for Mississippi?

Answer. Governor Tate Reeve's request for a major disaster declaration for the State of Mississippi was approved on Friday, May 23, 2025.

Question. Under the Biden Administration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection issued two ruling letters permitting foreign vessels to transport U.S.-sourced natural gas based on what appears to be a flawed understanding of the science of gas liquefaction. This decision undercut American shipyards-particularly those in my state-and runs counter to the Trump Administration's goal of restoring American maritime dominance and strengthening the U.S. maritime industrial base. Is the Department revisiting these rulings to ensure CBP makes the correct determination moving forward?

Answer. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has authority to issue rulings on prospective transactions (19 United States Code § 1625; see also 19 Code of Federal Regulations Part 177). All rulings issued by CBP are made publicly available on the Customs Rulings Online Search System, available at <https://rulings.cbp.gov/home>. The person or entity to whom a ruling is issued may appeal an adverse interpretive ruling (19 United States Code § 1625(b)). Such an appeal is entitled to de novo review before a higher-level official within CBP. In addition, the agency may modify or revoke a ruling. 19 United States Code § 1625(c).

For these two rulings, the determinations were based on specific factual findings supported by input from CBP's Laboratory and Scientific Services. Even after issuing the rulings, CBP reviewed each to ensure compliance and determined that the holdings are consistent with statute, regulation, and case law and concluded that there were no legal or factual errors contained within the rulings. Finally, CBP reviewed the rulings to determine whether modification or revocation was legally appropriate based on new Administration policies. After completing a thorough review, CBP determined the two rulings at issue do not require modification or revocation and are consistent with Administration policies.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS CONSORTIUM

Question. To date, the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC) has trained more than 60,000 first responders in preparation for the World Cup and is already working on training plans in support of the 2028 Olympics. If the NDPC is eliminated, how will the Department ensure that jurisdictions are prepared to address the security and emergency management needs associated with hosting such large-scale events?

Answer. The National Domestic Preparedness Consortium is duplicative of other training opportunities offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In-person training continues at three national academies: the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama and the National Fire Academy and the National Disaster and Emergency Management University in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Question. The updated 2025 Emergency Management Annual Planning Guidance, released on January 31, calls for expanded collaboration with stakeholders like the NDPC to ensure "expanded training and capacity building for emergency managers and first responders in the U.S." However, the FY25 budget request proposes eliminating the NDPC-directly contradicting this guidance. Why was this reversal made, and how does the Department reconcile this decision with its stated goals for emergency preparedness?

Answer. The Fiscal Year 2025 budget was superseded by the full year continuing resolution, which extended Fiscal Year 2024 funding levels. This Administration supports emergency managers and is focused on a sustainable approach to emergency management. This realignment in the Fiscal Year 2026 President's Budget will allow the Department to focus available resources on implementing higher priority, core mission areas. The National Domestic Preparedness Consortium is duplicative of other training opportunities offered by FEMA. Additionally, State, local, Tribal, and territorial jurisdictions may use existing grant funding to pay for training activities for first responders.

Question. With TSA implementing the Aviation Worker Screening Requirement (TSA-NA-23-02), a costly unfunded mandate has been passed on to airports to screen aviation workers. The FY24 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act directed TSA to provide a detailed analysis of the cost-benefit and risk implications of this proposal.

How does the Department plan to ensure that smaller regional airports can afford to comply with the new screening requirements without compromising operations?

Answer. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) developed the Transportation Security Administration National Amendment 23-02, Aviation Worker Screening to improve insider threat mitigation and complement existing aviation worker inspection requirements. In developing National Amendment 23-02, Aviation Worker Screening, TSA considered the cost and burden across the sector for airports of specific categories and worked with industry and associations to minimize the impact of these new aviation worker screening requirements. TSA conducted an analysis on the cost of these requirements, first in 2020 and then updated throughout the development of the final requirements to reflect any changes. The results of this analysis, combined with significant feedback from industry, led to significant changes from the proposed requirements and contributed to a strategy promoting consistent maturation and enhanced aviation worker screening.

TSA was, and continues to be, sensitive to the needs of industry regarding screening costs, including the complexities of hiring, procuring, and sustaining security resources and equipment. During the policy development process, TSA received extensive industry feedback on the proposed requirements, some of which discussed the burden on smaller airports. In response, TSA modified the final requirements to limit the applicability to larger airports (Category-X, I, and II) and removed smaller airports (Category-III and IV) from the applicability.

Additionally, consistent with TSA's commitment to outcome-focused policies, airports have many options as to how screening requirements are accomplished, and airports can reduce the number of screening hours they must complete by decreasing entry points and/or individuals with access. To create space for developing solutions, TSA implemented an informed compliance period and delayed the implementation of explosives detection screening equipment requirements.

Question. The final requirements set aviation worker screening baselines while providing airport operators flexibility to implement tailored solutions which fit their legal, regional, and local priorities. There are a wide range of screening options airports can use within their operational environment, recognizing that smaller airports may have different needs and resources than a larger airport. Larger airports are more likely to exceed the standards required by National Amendment 23-02, Aviation Worker Screening. Therefore, each airport has meaningful control over how many individuals and what type of equipment or screening processes to implement. It is TSA's intent to ensure security outcomes are met while encouraging and facilitating innovation.

Has TSA considered a tiered implementation approach, based on airport size and risk profile, to avoid placing disproportionate burdens on low-traffic facilities?

Answer. The requirements in the Transportation Security Administration National Amendment 23-02, Aviation Worker Screening are tiered based on airport size and risk:

- Primarily, National Amendment 23-02, Aviation Worker Screening, is limited to larger airports (Category-X, I, and II), and the requirements do not apply to smaller airports (Category-III and IV).
- Each covered airport must conduct a baseline of screening- this baseline is determined as a function of the number of employees with unescorted access to the secured area and the number of access points to secured and sterile areas. Airports with fewer employees (with access to secured areas) and/or fewer access points are generally not required to screen for as many hours as those with more.
- The category of each airport is further used to modify the baseline function. Category II airports are required to screen less than Category X or I airports even if all other factors are equal.
- TSA's goal with this design was to minimize a proportional impact to our Category II and I stakeholders while still ensuring necessary security value.

OLYMPICS & PARALYMPICS

Question. The President's recently released budget framework for FY26 includes funding to ensure DHS can "bolster State and local capacity to enhance security around key events and facilities" at the 2028 Games, among other major international events. What steps is DHS taking to ensure DHS resources are deployed

effectively and coordinated not only at the Federal level, but with State and local law enforcement as well to make the 2028 Olympics & Paralympics safe and secure?

Answer. On January 30, 2024, the Secretary of Homeland Security designated the 2028 Olympic Games and 2028 Paralympic Games as National Special Security Events. Following these designations, the U.S. Secret Service acted upon its mandated role to lead the planning, design, development, and implementation of a comprehensive security plan. The Secret Service formed an Executive Steering Committee comprised of State, local, and Federal law enforcement, public safety, and emergency management partners. Planning efforts are underway with our State, local, and Federal partners to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive security plan is developed in support of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

On March 7, 2025, the President issued an Executive Order, Establishing the White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup 2026.¹ The Task Force, which is administratively housed at the Department of Homeland Security, brings together expertise and support from across the Federal Government to ensure smooth coordination of this worldwide event hosted by the United States. The Task Force engagement team is working closely with State and local law enforcement, as well as with the Federal Coordinator in each city, to identify the needs and appropriately resource each location for the upcoming 2025 Club World Cup games and 2026 World Cup Matches. Furthermore, the Office for State and Local Law Enforcement is working closely with the Task Force to assist in the coordination and collaboration with major law enforcement associations, like the Major Cities Chiefs Association, National Fusion Center Association, Major County Sheriffs of America, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, who collectively represent the 18,000 law enforcement across the country, to identify opportunities to better share information and intelligence, identify concerns and resources needed (i.e. funding, CUAS support, training), and establish implementable solutions to support the upcoming events.

The National Special Security Event Executive Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis to provide direction for safety and security planning. Several of the National Special Security Event subcommittees are conducting regular planning and coordination to support the integration of safety and security in their respective functional areas at the Federal, State, and local levels. FEMA co-chairs four subcommittees on training and exercises, housing, external affairs and consequence management with Federal, State, and local representatives from law enforcement, public safety, emergency management, and public health, all of which will fully support the events.

Question. While the \$1 billion funding included in the House Homeland Security Committee's reconciliation guidance takes step to address critical security priorities related to the Games, it does not provide funds to address the significant additional cost related to Federal reimbursement of State and local law enforcement entities for overtime costs incurred by providing Games-time security services. In coordination with the Department of Justice and congressional appropriators, what steps will DHS take to ensure that funds required by the Federal Government to provide reimbursement to State and local law enforcement entities are included in the appropriations process?

Answer. FEMA understands the \$1 billion included in the House Homeland Security Committee's reconciliation guidance is to address these significant costs. The \$1 billion is for reimbursement of State and local requirements. If new requirements are identified, FEMA will collaborate with Congress through the regular appropriations process to address funding needs for any new requirements.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER MURPHY

Question. Concerning the case of Mr. Kilmar Abrego Garcia, I have the following questions (a yes or no response is acceptable for questions 2a., 2c., and 2d.):

Have you personally read, or been briefed on, the contents of the Supreme Court Opinion dated April 10, 2025 concerning the case of Mr. Abrego Garcia?

Answer. Due to pending litigation, the Department of Homeland Security is unable to provide a response at this time.

Question. Can you describe the steps you have personally taken to facilitate Mr. Abrego Garcia's return to the United States?

Answer. Mr. Abrego Garcia was returned to the United States on approximately June 6, 2025.

Question. Have you reached out to your counterpart in El Salvador about Mr. Abrego Garcia's case?

Answer. Due to pending litigation, the Department of Homeland Security is unable to provide a response at this time.

Question. When you visited the Center for Terrorism Confinement (CECOT) on March 26 for your photo opportunity, Mr. Abrego Garcia had been at CECOT for approximately 10 days. Did you check on his welfare during your visit to CECOT?

Answer. Due to pending litigation, the Department of Homeland Security is unable to provide a response at this time.

Question. It appears President Trump attempted to invoke the Alien Enemies Act (AEA) on March 14, but published the proclamation a day later, on March 15th. As we know, flights departed the United States on March 15th.

When did you personally become aware the President attempted to invoke the AEA?

Answer. On March 14, 2025, the President signed a proclamation, which was published on March 15, invoking his authorities under the Alien Enemies Act (AEA), 50 U.S.C. 21 et seq., against members of TdA. See Invocation of the Alien Enemies Act Regarding the Invasion of the United States by Tren de Aragua § 1 (Mar. 14, 2025), 90 Fed. Reg. 13,033 (Mar. 20, 2025) (Proclamation). This proclamation invoked the Alien Enemies Act against the Tren de Aragua terrorist organization, such that all Venezuelan citizens 14 years of age or older who are members of that organization and are not naturalized or lawful permanent residents of the United States are liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed as Alien Enemies. Due to ongoing litigation, the Department is unable to provide any additional information at this time.

Question. When did you personally become aware that Venezuelans removed under the authority of the AEA would be transported to CECOT?

Answer. Due to ongoing litigation, the Department is unable to provide any additional information at this time.

Question. The President of El Salvador is reported to have said that he is being paid at least \$6 million by the U.S. government to hold noncitizens from the United States in El Salvador's physical custody at CECOT.

Is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) paying for some or all of the reported \$6 million? If DHS is not paying, who is (other than the American taxpayers)?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security respectfully defers to the Department of State.

Question. Does the contract state how long detainees will be in prison at CECOT? If it does, please provide the length of time included in the contract.

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security respectfully defers to the Department of State.

Question. Concerning the detention of noncitizens at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, I have the following questions:

Is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) paying for some or all of the Guantanamo operations in the Department of Defense (DOD) portions of the base?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security respectfully defers to the Department of Defense.

Question. Does DHS plan to continue the detention of immigrants at Guantanamo Bay? If not, when does the government expect to wind down operations at Guantanamo Bay?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security will continue detention operations at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay as long as the Department of Defense is able to support doing so as directed by President Trump. The Department and specifically U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) currently uses the Migrant Operations Center and Joint Task Force Camp 6 as holding sites to arrange flights and removals, much like it does in numerous detention sites within the continental United States. ICE continues to detain illegal aliens at Guantanamo Bay. There are currently no plans to draw down operations.

Question. How much has DHS obligated or expended on detention and flights of non-citizens at Guantanamo Bay?

Answer. Please refer to the following tables.

Activity	January 21, 2025 through May 7, 2025 Actuals
Migrant Operations Center Detention Facility Costs	\$9,577,433

Activity	January 21, 2025 through May 7, 2025 Actuals
Travel	720,335
Supplies	226,053
Total	10,523,821

Flights January 21, 2025 through May, 10, 2025	
Mission Number	Total Flight Cost
25-000633	\$150,001.24
25-001116	169,368.08
25-001115	162,124.19
25-000815	92,786.85
25-001027	124,887.63
25-001324	116,312.86
TOTAL:	815,480.85

Question. Is DHS reimbursing the Department of Defense (DOD) for any costs related to detention or transportation to or at Guantanamo? If yes, please provide the total actual and projected amounts of reimbursement.

Answer. The March 7, 2025, Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense does not provide for the exchange of funds or manpower between agencies.

Question. On April 28, President Trump issued an Executive Order requesting DHS and DOD examine whether it would be appropriate to invoke the Insurrection Act.

Did you examine whether the administration should invoke the Insurrection Act?

Question. As required under President Trump's Proclamation 10886, Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States issued on January 20, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense conducted a joint assessment of conditions at the southern border in the first 90 days of the Administration. This assessment included a recommendation regarding whether the Administration should invoke the Insurrection Act as required by the Proclamation.

Did you submit your recommendations to the President? If so, when did you submit them?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense jointly submitted our report to President Trump. The Department of Homeland Security the Department of Defense jointly submitted our report to President Trump on April 24, 2025.

Question. What did you recommend the President do?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security is unable to share this information as the recommendations in the report remain deliberative within the Executive Branch.

Question. Secretary Noem, you've been outspoken in calling for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to return to its core responsibilities and missions. These three congressionally mandated missions are cybersecurity, infrastructure security, and emergency communications. I have questions for you about CISA's emergency communications mission—which, as laid out on the CISA website, is to uphold “vital, two-way connection, communication, and collaboration between the public and private sectors.” I need you to help me understand how President Trump's politically motivated persecution of his own former CISA Director Chris Krebs—simply for modeling courageous, honest emergency communications under tremendous political pressure and threats of violence—is consistent with your commitment to upholding the agency's core mission, and basic American rights and values.

Are you aware of the emergency communications component of CISA's congressionally mandated, core mission, Secretary Noem?

Answer. Yes, I am aware of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) core, statutory mission, which remains unchanged.

Question. Are you committed to supporting this mission—and upholding the First Amendment rights it depends upon—in your role as DHS Secretary?

Answer. Yes, I and the Department of Homeland Security are committed to following the law.

Question. Are you aware that over the past month President Trump has revoked former CISA Director Chris Krebs' security clearance, coerced his resignation from a private-sector job, and even canceled his membership in the Global Entry program—explicitly in response to Krebs offering his professional judgment that the 2020 election was safe and secure, and for rejecting debunked QAnon conspiracy theories about rigged voting machines?

Answer. Yes, I am aware of President Trump's Executive Order on Chris Krebs.

Question. Do you personally believe the 2020 Election was stolen?

Answer. This is a non-germane political question.

Question. Do you, in your professional capacity as Secretary of Homeland Security, believe the 2020 Election was stolen?

Answer. This is a non-germane political question.

Question. I'm deeply concerned that the example of Krebs will chill free speech and undermine CISA's effectiveness in its overarching mission. Can you explain how this outrageous act of political retribution—and the ongoing open-ended investigation your department and the DOJ are leading into Krebs—further CISA's mission of encouraging non-politicized, accurate emergency communications and keeping Americans and small businesses safe from critical infrastructure attacks?

Answer. CISA's statutory mission continues without interruption. Information sharing with our partners is an essential part of fulfilling that mission.

Question. The FY26 President's Budget proposes a nearly 17 percent cut to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), slashing \$491 million from its \$3 billion budget. This proposed cut would certainly inhibit CISA's ability to conduct its cybersecurity mission and support critical infrastructure entities and small businesses in need of support.

Can you specify how the department is identifying the “duplicative” programs and others it plans to cut under this budget?

Answer. CISA's statutory mission continues without interruption. The agency is performing line-by-line reviews of every requirement in the agency's spend plan, to include all discretionary spending.

Contracts and interagency agreements have been examined to ensure full compliance with Presidential guidance and CISA's statutory authorities. The agency is working closely with Department of Homeland Security leadership to identify opportunities for greater accountability, transparency, and cost-savings.

Question. How is the department verifying that these cuts will not curtail or negatively impact key programs for critical infrastructure, small businesses, and international collaboration to counter foreign cyber-attacks with allies?

Answer. CISA was designed to work across public and private sectors to improve the Nation's cyber and physical infrastructure security. CISA's authorities and mission allow for agility, flexibility, and innovation critical to its success.

The budget supports CISA's efforts to prioritize high-risk areas, streamline operations, and adopt a risk-informed approach to focus on the most critical vulnerabilities and threats. CISA will continue to leverage strong partnerships with private sector entities; State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments; and international allies to pool resources, share intelligence, and coordinate responses to emerging threats.

Question. How does the department justify dialing back CISA's funding and personnel at a time when foreign adversaries' cyber capabilities and presence within U.S. systems is only increasing and threatening Americans' security?

Answer. Though staff has been reduced due to the voluntary Workforce Transition Program, CISA's ability to carry out its statutory mission continues without interruption. CISA has conducted an extensive review of its authorities to both refocus the agency on its core mission and eliminate duplicative functions. The agency will continue to address the most critical vulnerabilities and threats using a risk-based approach to ensure the most vital infrastructure is protected.

Question. I have heard much from cadets, faculty, and leaders at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, about the serious need to upgrade the Academy's living quarters—specifically, the Chase Hall Barracks and its oldest section, Annex A. Built in the 1930s, this facility requires significant abatement to address asbestos and lead in the berthing rooms—which should be unacceptable in any

space but certainly cannot be tolerated where cadets sleep. I have also heard about non-functioning heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, which can lead to serious health issues in a temperate place like New London. Even with these glaring deficiencies in Chase Hall impacting cadets' mental and physical well being—not to mention recruiting and retention—the project somehow did make it into the FY25 Budget Request. However, \$29 million for Annex A rehabilitation did make the Unfunded Priorities List and was funded in the FY25 Senate Homeland Security Appropriations bill, before failing to pass into law with March's continuing resolution.

Can you outline the Department's plan for prioritizing and swiftly rectifying the serious shortcomings in Coast Guard Academy living facilities like Chase Hall Annex A?

Answer. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has invested significant resources to modernize Annexes C and D of Chase Hall to ensure it can house the USCG's future officer corps for decades to come. Currently, Chase Hall houses over 1,100 cadets and officer candidates, but habitability challenges have plagued the aging building. As we grow the U.S. Coast Guard, Chase Hall is key to training and building the officer corps. The Department of Homeland Security and USCG will continue to invest in the modernization of Chase Hall and other infrastructure projects at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

Question. What about other living facilities at the Coast Guard Academy?

Answer. The U.S. Coast Guard continues to invest in living facilities within the USCG Academy campus. In Fiscal Year 2022, USCG was appropriated \$25 million to recapitalize the Academy's steam distribution system to improve habitability throughout the campus. Additionally, in 2024, the USCG Academy completed soil remediation around the senior officer housing units, removing hazardous lead paint from the surrounding area. The Service will continue to evaluate and prioritize infrastructure needs at all USCG Academy living facilities to provide cadets, officer candidates, and staff with a safe, healthy living environment.

Question. What is the overall vision for the Department and Coast Guard for investing in upgrades to the Academy's campus facilities more broadly, with an eye towards improving quality of life, training, retention, and readiness?

Answer. I appreciate this Committee's support in modernizing the aging infrastructure at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, which is home to all Coast Guard officer accession programs. A key Force Design 2028 initiative is to invest in the Coast Guard's future officer leaders, including the facilities where cadets and officer candidates live, learn, and train. The Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Coast Guard will continue to evaluate infrastructure needs at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and prioritize these critical investments in future budget requests.

Question. I have seen the U.S. Coast Guard's announcement of Force Design 2028, and I would like more specifics on this proposed reorganization.

Please outline in detail every step the Coast Guard has taken to date, especially since the initial announcement on April 3, 2025.

Answer. Leveraging the knowledge of hundreds of subject matter experts throughout the service, the USCG identified several initiatives necessary to become a stronger, more ready, and more capable military service through improvements in four areas: Contracting & Acquisition, Technology, People, and Organization. The United States Coast Guard delivered recommendations to my office and is establishing an implementation team.

Question. Please outline in detail additional steps planned for the months and years ahead, as part of FD28.

Answer. The United States Coast Guard is developing an implementation plan to be delivered to my office and is establishing an Implementation Team.

Question. My understanding is that Force Design 2028 is being carried out at the direction of an unconfirmed "Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Coast Guard" a position that does not exist. Can you explain under what authority this individual is empowered to take on these duties?

Answer. In Force Design 2028, I provided the U.S. Coast Guard with a bold blueprint needed to drive decisive and transformational change. The acting Commandant is carrying out my direction through the Force Design 2028 implementation.

Question. Please provide the department and service's authorities for undertaking actions under Force Design 2028?

Answer. The Department and USCG are taking actions within the scope of the authorities provided under Title 14, United States Code, and other statutes. As Force Design 2028 implementation proceeds, the Service and the Department may request legislative changes if a need for additional authority is identified.

Question. I was troubled to see the Coast Guard suspend its "Harassing Behavior Prevention, Response, and Accountability" policy on January 27, 2025—especially

after decades of failure to protect Coast Guard personnel, and Coast Guard Academy cadets in particular, from harassment and assault and to ensure accountability for these failures.

Please describe the rationale for suspending this policy. How has the department and service taken steps to ensure that USCG personnel were not put at increased risk of harassing behavior since the suspension?

Answer. Although the U.S. Coast Guard paused the majority of the policies and procedures outlined in the Harassing Behavior Prevention, Response, and Accountability, Commandant Instruction 5350.6, the requirements related to complaints of sexual harassment remained active. Furthermore, the lawful general order prohibiting other harassment remained in place. The other portions of the policy were paused to enable a comprehensive review of policy and procedures. During this review, USCG members and employees were still able to report harassing behavior or any other misconduct to their chain of command. All commands and supervisors are required to address reports in a timely manner and conduct inquiries in accordance with existing policy and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Additionally, civilian and military members may still report discriminatory harassment to the Civil Rights Division through the Equal Employment Opportunity or Military Equal Opportunity programs.

Question. Please provide an update on the Coast Guard's 90-day policy review that began with the policy's suspension on January 27, 2025. If not yet complete, despite the late April due date, please share all available information, findings, and recommendations.

Answer. The U.S. Coast Guard extended the comprehensive review of harassing behavior policy and procedures and it is ongoing.

Question. How does the Coast Guard and the department plan to ensure adequate resources, protections, policies, and accountability measures are put into place to address the service's past failures, including Operation Fouled Anchor, and to create a safer environment for all USCG personnel going forward?

Answer. USCG continues to dedicate resources to enhance prevention efforts, improve safety, expand victim support services, and promote accountability at every level. All allegations of sexual assault and harassment are taken seriously, including thorough and impartial investigations, and perpetrators are held accountable. USCG is fully committed to fostering a culture of professionalism and respect where every member of our workforce, including our most junior personnel, feel safe, supported, and empowered to succeed.

Question. DHS has encouraged noncitizens to leave the U.S. by distributing flyers at immigration court hearings and offering to provide financial assistance for individuals who seek to self-deport. I have several questions about the accuracy of the information DHS is providing to immigrants as they make a decision to leave the U.S.

Can you explain why you believe it is accurate to state that participation in CBP Home self-deportation may help preserve the option for someone to re-enter the U.S. legally in the future?

Answer. Participation in CBP Home does not prevent an illegal alien from legally returning to the United States in the future if they meet all eligibility requirements, follow lawful processes, and are eligible for admission. Any future reentry into the United States is subject to U.S. immigration laws and regulations and will depend on the alien's specific circumstances at the time they seek lawful entry.

Question. Is it true that if someone with pending immigration proceedings departs the U.S. without first receiving a final decision from an Immigration Judge, they subject themselves to a potential 10-year bar on legally returning to the U.S.? Why or why not?

Answer. Whether an alien is subject to the 10-year bar depends on the individual alien's circumstances. Project Homecoming participants may consult with an immigration attorney or legal counsel prior to indicating the intent to self-depart through the CBP Home App.

Question. FEMA's Non-Profit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is a critical resource that helps fund physical security upgrades, training, and other tools for eligible 501(c)(3) organizations. Across Connecticut, synagogues, mosques, and churches regularly apply for the funding through NSGP so that members of their community feel safe in their houses of worship. Funding for the program has been a long-standing, bipartisan commitment, but unfortunately the available resources continue to fall short of national demand. For example, in the FY2024 grant cycle, DHS only had available funding for 57 percent of all grant applications. Additional work must also be done to simplify the application process and speed up the time it takes for approved organizations to receive the funding.

How much additional funding does the Department anticipate it would need to satisfy national demand for NSGP in Fiscal Year 2026?

Answer. The Federal Emergency Management Agency thoroughly reviews all grant applications for national security and terrorism threats. The Fiscal Year 2026 President's Budget accurately captures the necessary funding levels (\$274.5 million) for the Non-Profit Security Grant Program.

Question. How is the administration preparing for the potential increase in NSGP applications associated with the 2026 World Cup, particular as it relates to ensuring that houses of worship continue to have equitable access to the program?

Answer. The Federal Emergency Management Agency thoroughly reviews all grant applications for national security and terrorism threats. Houses of worship that have elevated risks due to terrorism are prioritized in the grant award process.

Question. DHS is funding a \$200 million ad campaign in which you thank President Trump for his immigration policies. I have several questions about the bidding process for these ads and the source of the funds. The two firms selected for the contract for these ads—People Who Think, LLC and Safe America Media, LLC, are both reportedly owned by Republican political consultants, some of whom have worked directly with Donald Trump's presidential campaigns. In government documents, it appears that the Department is alleging it doesn't have to follow a free and fair competition process for contracts because of the alleged emergency at the border.

Did you bypass the competitive bidding process to place these contracts and, if so, why?

Answer. The Stronger Borders, Stronger America advertising and media services contracts were competitively awarded in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation. The Department of Homeland Security conducted this procurement, ran by career government officials, in accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulations.

These common-sense ads embody the Department's duty to enforce the United States' immigration laws—just like previous efforts to deter illegal migration, such as the “Say No to the Coyote” digital ad campaign launched by United States Customs and Border Protection in 2022. Right now, border crossings are the lowest ever¹, traffic through the Darien Gap has plummeted by 99 percent,² and even the New York Times is reporting on the increasing numbers of illegal aliens self-deporting.³ The world is hearing America's message loud and clear.

The Department of Homeland Security has and will continue, in collaboration with the Department of Government Efficiency, to review all of the Department's contracts for efficiency and cost savings.

Question. It has also been reported that the \$200 million in funds for these ads were redirected from the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), a critical oversight body that the Trump administration has entirely de-staffed, despite Sen. Britt and me providing funds for this office for each fiscal year we've been involved in this subcommittee. Can you confirm if some or all of these \$200 million were taken from the CRCL budget?

Answer. None of the funding for the Ad Campaign was taken from the Department of Homeland Security Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

Question. The Federal statute creating the fee regime for USCIS States all the deposits from fees collected shall go towards the “expenses in providing immigration adjudication and naturalization services.”

Are USCIS fee funds being used for immigration enforcement activities?

Answer. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) fee funds are being used in accordance with 8 United States Code 1356(m) Immigration Examinations Fee Account:

Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, all adjudication fees as are designated by the Attorney General in regulations shall be deposited as offsetting receipts into a separate account entitled “Immigration Examinations Fee Account” in the Treasury of the United States, whether collected directly by the Attorney General or through clerks of courts: Provided, however, That all fees received by the Attorney General from applicants residing in the Virgin Islands of the United States, and in Guam, under this subsection shall be paid over to the treasury of the Virgin Islands and to the treasury of Guam: Provided further, That fees for providing adjudication and naturalization services may be set at a level that will en-

¹ <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/march-numbers-show-most-secure-border-history-operational-control>

² [breitbart.com/latin-america/2025/03/11/panama-records-99-drop-in-u-s-bound-migration-through-darien-gap/](https://www.breitbart.com/latin-america/2025/03/11/panama-records-99-drop-in-u-s-bound-migration-through-darien-gap/)

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/28/briefing/the-self-deporters.html>

sure recovery of the full costs of providing all such services, including the costs of similar services provided without charge to asylum applicants or other immigrants.

Question. Has there been an analysis of whether using USCIS fees complies with the statute? If so, can you please share the analysis.

Answer. USCIS prepares an annual budget submission and accompanying congressional justifications for each of USCIS' resources, including USCIS fee accounts, outlining how USCIS intends to spend its fees. Additionally, USCIS fees authorized by section 1356(m) are established by rulemaking which includes a full analysis of USCIS costs, necessary fees, and how fees will be used to support USCIS operational activities.

Question. DHS sent a notice to a United States Citizen in my state that her status was being terminated and she should immediately depart the United States.

Were you aware DHS sent United States Citizens notices that their status was terminated and that they should immediately depart the United States?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued legitimate notices terminating parole for aliens who no longer have a lawful basis to remain in the United States. DHS used e-mail addresses provided by aliens to send parole termination notifications to parolees. If a non-personal e-mail-such as a U.S. citizen contact-was provided by the alien, notices may have been sent to unintended recipients.

Question. What has been done to correct this? How did you get the email address for a US Citizen with no DHS contact?

Answer. DHS used e-mail addresses provided by aliens to send parole termination notifications to parolees. If a non-personal e-mail-such as a U.S. citizen contact-was provided by the alien, notices may have been sent to unintended recipients. DHS will address any issues brought to our attention on a case-by-case basis.

Question. Will you commit to sending each citizen a follow up letter acknowledging the mistake and assuring them they are safe from DHS?

Answer. The notice was specific to parole termination of aliens and has no impact on U.S. citizens.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR PATTY MURRAY

Question. Secretary Noem cited recruitment statistics for several DHS components, stating that "CBP's up fifty-four percent—Coast Guard is up over a hundred percent and the Secret Service is up over two hundred percent." Please provide the data supporting these statements.

Answer. From January 1, 2024, through May 1, 2024, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) received 36,101 applicants for Border Patrol Agents and Customs and Border Protection Officers. From January 1, 2025, through May 1, 2025, CBP received 56,170 applicants for Border Patrol Agents and Customs and Border Protection Officers, representing a 56 percent increase.

From October 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) received 4,640 active-duty enlisted applicants, 108 percent of the Fiscal Year 2025 recruitment target of 4,300.

From January 20, 2024, through April 16, 2024, the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) received 7,421 applicants. From January 20, 2025, through April 16, 2025, USSS received 21,838 applicants, representing a 194 percent increase.

Question. The Department released a public statement asserting that CBP had "total control of the border." What is the Department's definition of "total control of the border?" What metrics are used to make that assertion? If the Department has "total control of the border" please explain why additional investments are needed?

Answer. The Trump Administration's goal is to make America Safe Again and that begins with obtaining and sustaining total control of our borders. Total control of the border means that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is able to effectively respond to and prevent illicit activity at the border, including illegal immigration. Specifically, daily border encounters are down by 93 percent; known gotaways—the top threat to public safety—are down by 95 percent; and migrant crossings in the Darien Gap are down by 99.99 percent.

The Department uses key metrics related to illegal immigration flows, drug and arms seizures, and arrests of criminals, gang members, and members of foreign terrorist organizations to determine the effectiveness of its efforts at the border. These metrics demonstrate tremendous improvement over the border overseen by the previous Administration and indicate that the Department has reclaimed control over the border.

For example, only five illegal aliens were temporarily allowed into the United States in April 2025 for U.S. special interest court cases—a staggering drop from the roughly 68,000 released along the southern border during the same month last year. April 2025 saw the lowest number of illegal alien encounters at the southern border in recorded history, less than 6,300. This is a 95 percent drop from April of 2024, where the number of encounters was 129,000. In sum, President Trump’s successful policies have ensured that fewer illegal aliens are coming to our border and that those who persist in making the journey are being apprehended and removed.

Now that DHS has achieved total control of the border, we need to sustain it. Smugglers, terrorists, and other criminals are always changing their tactics to try to breach our border and bring harm to the American people. To address this enduring threat, we need Congress to secure investments in staffing, infrastructure, technology, information sharing, and public-private partnerships. We need to improve infrastructure along the border and to obtain and install new surveillance and detection technology, primary and secondary border wall systems and waterborne barrier systems.

Control of the border has only been successful because President Trump declared a National Emergency at the Southwest Border and brought in the Department of Defense to assist. Existing CBP staffing alone could not have achieved this level of border control.

Question. The Secretary’s statement cited a decrease in narcotics seizures and described that decrease as a sign of progress. Please explain why the Secretary believes an over 50 percent decrease in the seizure of fentanyl from this same time frame as last year is progress?

Answer. In March of 2025, fentanyl seized at the southern border decreased by 54 percent in comparison to March of 2024. The fact is that President Trump’s successful policies have made it more risky and more expensive for drug traffickers to attempt to send drugs across the border. CBP, supported by the Department of Defense at President Trump’s direction, has finally been empowered to secure our border and keep drugs and criminals out of our country. Furthermore, President Trump has successfully convinced the Mexican government to step up and crack down on drug traffickers on their side of the border, degrading their ability to produce fentanyl. Simply put, the reason we are seizing less fentanyl is that less fentanyl is coming.

Question. The Department has shuttered the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman, and the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, despite each office having congressionally mandated requirements. Please explain how the Department intends to fulfill the statutorily required functions of the previously mentioned offices and how many staff the Department will have executing those requirements.

Answer. The Offices will continue to perform their statutorily mandated duties.

Question. Is it the Department and the Administration’s intent to downgrade current detention standard requirements for newly acquired facilities or beds?

How does the Department intend to implement standards in new facilities versus short-term holding facilities?

Does the Department intend to continue implementing TEDs standards in future ICE soft-sided facilities? If so, please provide the written legal justification why ICE facilities may utilize these standards.

Answer. No, all U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (All ICE) detention facilities will continue to operate under ICE’s National Detention Standards. Facilities currently operating under the “Performance Based National Detention Standards” will begin to use ICE National Detention Standards when existing contracts expire. Additionally, ICE issued a new set of standards for Non-Dedicated Intergovernmental Services Agreements, which are designed to serve as an overlay to their existing detailed standards and requirements with which non-dedicated detention Service Providers (e.g., county and local government partners) are already required to comply.

All new facilities will be contractually obligated to operate in accordance with ICE National Detention Standards except facilities operated by the Bureau of Prisons and United States Marshals Service, which will abide by their own national detention standards.

ICE is currently applying the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) National Standards on Transport, Escort, Detention, and Search (TEDS) at the El Paso Emergency Holding Facility. This facility was previously operated by CBP, and it currently holds aliens for periods under 72 hours.

The TEDS standards address procedures and services required for short term hold rooms and detention in accordance with Federal laws, which establish standards of care in the United States pertaining to hold rooms such as temperature, meals,

clean water, hygiene, inventory, retention, and return of an individual's personal property such as identification documents, medications, currency, and legal papers, and the prevention of sexual abuse and assault.

Future, soft-sided facilities holding aliens for periods longer than 72 hours will operate under ICE National Detention Standards. These standards apply to facilities holding aliens for over 72 hours and address procedures and services required for longer-term detention in accordance with Federal laws establishing standards of care in the United States, including: conditions of confinement; safety and security (e.g., use of force and restraints, searches, segregation, disciplinary systems, and protection from sexual abuse and assault); detained alien care (food service, medical and mental health care, and personal hygiene); access to due process (legal materials, legal visitation and phone calls,⁴ and consular officials); and activities (telephone access, social visitation, recreation, correspondence, and religious services).

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR GARY PETERS

Question. The DHS Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate has long funded universities to conduct deep analysis of the most urgent threats to homeland security, such as terrorism and fentanyl trafficking, and provide actionable recommendations for DHS components. S&T also develops technology to detect fentanyl and related drugs at the border. You have noted that some of the best answers come from outside government, and that's exactly who S&T looks to for solutions to tough problems. After cutting funding for nearly all the DHS Centers of Excellence that were funded by S&T, how will DHS get the best research, science, and technology support that it needs to carry out its homeland security mission?

Answer. The Centers of Excellence will transition to emeritus status with no continued annual funding from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The expertise and capabilities afforded through the Department of Homeland Security Centers of Excellence will remain available via utilization of their Basic Ordering Agreement. Basic Ordering Agreements are a streamlined funding mechanism that allow the government to fund directed research for more immediate impacts through emeritus Centers of Excellence. The Science and Technology Directorate will continue to resource research activities with a range of performers, including academia, to assess emerging vulnerabilities and anticipate future threats within priority mission areas.

Question. How many DHS personnel are currently stationed at Guantánamo?

Answer. As of May 8, 2025, there were 46 DHS personnel stationed at Naval Station Guantánamo Bay.

Question. How many DHS contractors are currently stationed at Guantánamo?

Answer. As of May 8, 2025, there were 75 DHS contractors stationed at Guantánamo Bay.

Question. How many U.S. military are currently stationed at Guantánamo in support of DHS's immigration detention mission?

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security respectfully defers to the Department of Defense.

Question. How many immigrants have been detained by ICE at Guantánamo? Please provide a count by nationality and dates of detention.

Answer. Please refer to the below table.

Detention at Naval Station Guantánamo Bay by Country of Citizenship February 4, 2025 through May 18, 2025¹

Country of Citizenship	Total Aliens Booked-In
Venezuela	232
Nicaragua	160
El Salvador	25
Guatemala	15

⁴There is no law that specifically mandates "legal rights group presentations" in ICE detention facilities. This has been a policy requirement found within ICE's Performance Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS) and National Detention Standards (NDS) under which ICE detention operators are contractually obligated. The standards are available on ICE.gov. Section 6.4 in NDS 2025 and PBNDS.

Detention at Naval Station Guantánamo Bay by Country of Citizenship February 4, 2025 through
May 18, 2025 ¹—Continued

Country of Citizenship	Total Aliens Booked-In
Ecuador	15
Colombia	9
Honduras	9
Dominican Republic	6
Vietnam	4
Brazil	4
Peru	3
Türkiye	2
Afghanistan	2
Cambodia	1
Senegal	1
Costa Rica	1
Liberia	1
Morocco	1
Belize	1
Sweden	1
Syria	1
Bolivia	1
Guinea	1
Laos	1
Romania	1
Egypt	1
Georgia	1
Total	500

¹ ICE is unable to provide a breakdown of dates due to operational concerns.

Question. ICE has stated that the detention of immigrants is “temporary” at Guantánamo.

What is the average length of detention for immigrants held at Guantánamo?

Answer. Please refer to the below table.

Naval Station Guantánamo Bay Detention Overview

Average Days in Detention	Shortest Detention in Days	Longest Detention in Days	Aliens Booked-Outs	Aliens Currently in Detention
10.35		52	427	73

Question. What is the shortest length of time an immigrant has been held at Guantánamo?

Answer. The shortest detention stay is less than 24 hours.

Question. What is the longest amount of time that an immigrant has been held at Guantánamo?

Answer. The longest detention stay is 52 days.

Question. How many days does DHS consider detention at Guantánamo to be “temporary”?

Answer. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) leverages the Migrant Operations Center and Joint Task Force Camp Six for detention sites to arrange flights and removals. However, the time an alien remains in custody at Naval Station Guantánamo Bay depends on various factors, including the length of time it takes to secure a removal flight.

Question. What is the current maximum limit for usable detention space by DHS at Guantánamo? Please provide numbers for Camp VI, the Migrant Operations Center, and any other facilities.

Answer. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is currently using Naval Station Guantanamo Bay to house detained aliens subject to executable final orders without legal impediments to removal. ICE leverages the Migrant Operations Center and Joint Task Force Camp Six for detention sites. The Migrant Operations

Center can currently hold up to 50 persons and the current holding capacity for the Camp Six facility is up to 143 persons.

Question. What entity (i.e. ICE Air or Department of Defense) is responsible for transporting people to Guantánamo? From Guantánamo?

Answer. ICE Air Operations operates flights in and out of the location using a contracted carrier.

Question. The National Fire Academy (NFA) was closed earlier this year as part of a review to ensure alignment with the Administration's priorities. Given the importance of the NFA to training fire service personnel from all around the country and helping to ensure nation-wide readiness, when will the NFA campus will be reopened and trainings be made available again?

Answer. In-person training has resumed at three national schoolhouses in June 2025—the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama and the National Fire Academy and the National Disaster and Emergency Management University in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Following a comprehensive review by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Fire Administration, it was determined certain courses provide effective training to enhance national readiness for State, local, Tribal, and territorial emergency managers, first responders, and local leaders. FEMA's principles for emergency management assert that disasters are best managed when they are federally supported, state managed, and locally executed.

Question. Due to personnel shortages, the U.S. Coast Guard has made operational changes and temporary station closures across the country, including at a number of locations across the Great Lakes. How are you prioritizing recruitment, retention, and training, of the personnel necessary to restore the Coast Guard's full operational capacity in the Great Lakes?

Answer. In Fiscal Year 2022, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) made the strategic decision to focus significant resources and personnel to growing its worldwide recruiting capacity. The Service focused on recruiting new service members from across the Nation to meet personnel needs at every USCG unit. In Fiscal Year 2024, the Service achieved its active duty recruiting goals for the first time since Fiscal Year 2017 and closed its workforce gap by nearly 1,000 members.

USCG continues to expand recruiting operations and will open a new recruiting office in Grand Rapids, Michigan, later this year. This is in addition to the five other recruiting offices in the Great Lakes region. The Service continues to enhance its recruiting ability to ensure it can fully staff every unit to maximize operational readiness across the Nation.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

CASE OF KILMAR ABREGO GARCIA

Question. On April 10th, the Supreme Court ruled 9–0 that the Trump Administration must facilitate the return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Maryland resident, to the United States. The Trump Administration has acknowledged that his deportation to El Salvador was an “administrative error”, and President Trump said himself in the Oval Office that he “could” return Abrego Garcia with a phone call to El Salvadoran President Bukele.

During the hearing you claimed, “this Administration is following and complying with all Federal court orders.” So I reiterate my question to you: what have you done and what has DHS done to comply with the Supreme Court's order to “facilitate” Mr. Abrego Garcia's return to the United States?

Answer. Mr. Abrego Garcia was returned to the United States around June 6, 2025.

U.S. EL SALVADOR DEPORTEE DETENTION AGREEMENT

Question. The State Department has informed Congress that the Trump Administration intends to pay El Salvador up to \$15 million to imprison deportees, at least \$6 million of which has already been paid. During your testimony, you agreed to respond to the letter I sent you on April 8th regarding Mr. Abrego Garcia's deportation, which included questions about the Administration's actions in this case. One of the questions asks you to provide to Congress the grant agreement document between the United States and the government of El Salvador on the detention of people deported from the U.S. When I asked you about this during your hearing, you said, “I'm sure you can see this document as well.”

When will you respond to that letter as promised?

Answer. On May 19, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provided a response to your April 8, 2025 letter.

Question. Please provide the grant agreement with El Salvador or let me know how we can arrange for me to see it.

Answer. The Department of Homeland Security respectfully defers to the Department of State.

THE NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY

Question. In March 2025, the Administration canceled all in-person first responder training courses at the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA) National Fire Academy (NFA) and the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), collocated at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. I sent you a letter, along with Congresswoman Delaney and 64 of my fellow Members of Congress, on March 14th about the cancellations and never received a response. During the hearing you mentioned to me that, "I believe we did respond." Moreover, you also mentioned that "those grants and programs are being facilitated, and those dollars will be forwarded. So, that is something that if I didn't get that back to you, we will get it to you within 24 hours."

When will you provide the response to the letter?

Answer. DHS thoroughly evaluated our training programs and spending to ensure alignment with Administration priorities and support responsible spending. The Department's review has been completed, and the schoolhouses have reopened. In-person trainings resumed in early June.

In reviewing available trainings, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) worked to ensure training and education resources are maximized to best serve our State, local, Tribal Nation, and territorial first responders. Our goal is to ensure that we are effectively and efficiently addressing the most critical preparedness outcomes for our partners while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Question. When will the in-person classes resume and the restoration of funding for the NFA and EMI start?

Answer. In-person training has resumed at three national schoolhouses in June 2025—the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama and the National Fire Academy and the National Disaster and Emergency Management University in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Following a comprehensive review by FEMA and the U.S. Fire Administration, it was determined certain courses provide effective training to enhance national readiness for State, local, Tribal, and territorial emergency managers, first responders, and local leaders. FEMA's principles for emergency management assert that disasters are best managed when they are federally supported, state managed, and locally executed.

BALTIMORE HOLDING ROOMS

Question. On April 10th, following reports of inhumane conditions in the ICE Baltimore Field Office's holding rooms and a visit by our staff to the facility, Senator Alsobrooks and I sent you a letter expressing our concern. In the letter, we requested the production of the waiver for the 12-hour holding rule and asked a series of questions regarding ICE and DHS's operations.

My office has been told that the Department's response to the letter is in process but has not been given a timeline. Do you commit to provide a response to our letter, and if so, when?

Answer. The Department is committed to providing a response and is working to provide a response to your letter.

Question. Do you commit to providing Senator Alsobrooks and me the waiver document granting Baltimore's ICE field office authorization to waive the 12-hour holding rule?

Answer. Please refer to the attached memorandum, Attachment A—Enforcement and Removal Operations Baltimore Field Office Hold Room—Waiver Request (January 30, 2025).

ICE PRIORITIZATION OF ENFORCEMENT

Question. In your nomination hearing, you said that "President Trump has been very clear that his priority is going to be deporting criminals, those who have broken our laws and perpetuated violence in our communities. That'll be the priority... those with criminal convictions in our country, that will be a focus that we need to tackle right away."

How is ICE determining that its targets for enforcement are persons with criminal convictions?

Answer. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) employs a broad range of law enforcement and intelligence techniques to identify aliens who are present in the United States without authorization or are otherwise removable, including those who may pose threats to national security, public safety, or border security, or who undermine the integrity of United States immigration laws.

ICE's Targeting Operations Center provides leads and referrals to ICE field offices to enhance operational efficiency of enforcement actions, including through the support of the following organizations:

- The National Criminal Analysis and Targeting Center analyzes data in law enforcement and immigration databases to identify and locate priority targets.
- The Law Enforcement Support Center provides real-time data on criminal aliens to a variety of federal, State, and local law enforcement partners.

The Pacific Enforcement Response Center reviews data on removable aliens with criminal charges and/or convictions and provides near-real time leads and referrals to ICE teams operating across all field offices.

ICE DETENTION

Question. In March, Congress passed a continuing resolution that provided nearly \$500 million additional funding for ICE, giving the agency a nearly \$10 billion budget. Shortly after, however, ICE issued a solicitation for "Emergency Detention and Related Services," which could spend up to \$45 billion over 2 years for new ICE jails and related services. ICE also posted a sole source justification noticing less than competitive contract awards. The solicitations came shortly after the Chair and Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee sent a bipartisan letter to the Trump administration challenging its treatment of emergency-designated funding included in the full-year CR passed in March 2025.

How does ICE justify issuing solicitations for \$45 billion and awarding new contracts when it is currently under a Continuing Resolution, and already spending well over its annually appropriated budget, which was just increased to \$10 billion?

Answer. The Administration directed ICE to increase the number of detention beds to meet operational needs as enforcement operations intensify in line with President Trump's desire to vigorously enforce U.S. immigration laws. ICE has issued various solicitations and requests for information to identify potential detention facilities to meet the agency's needs, particularly in locations with insufficient detention capacity. Certain contracts may be deemed essential to maintain these operations without interruption. While under a continuing resolution, agencies have some flexibility to reallocate funds within their existing budget to address urgent needs. In this case, ICE may prioritize essential contracts and adjust other expenditures accordingly.

Question. What private contractor bids or proposals is ICE considering for expansion of its detention and deportation operations?

Answer. ICE is currently considering a variety of locations to expand detention capacity; however, no decisions have been made at this time.

ICE is working with the Department of Defense to establish several immigration staging and detention locations on Department of Defense installations.

Question. Please provide the Committee with information regarding which State, county, or local governments, or private companies responded to the Emergency Detention Related Services sourcing vehicle posted in April 2025 seeking funds from the \$45 billion for additional detention capacity. What are the names of the proposed facilities or regions?

Answer. Please refer to the below table for the requested information. ICE and Department of Defense have identified the following locations for emergency detention facilities.

- Fort Bliss (Montana site) (El Paso, Texas);
- Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst (Lakehurst, New Jersey); and
- Camp Atterbury (Franklin, Indiana).

	Offeror Name	Offeror Unique Entity Identifier	Address
1	Active Deployment Systems	XXXSMP4HJ1	280 Hugo Road, San Marcos, Texas 78666, United States of America
2	Acuity	L41JMCZK3GW6	10701 Parkridge Boulevard, Suite 200, Reston, Virginia 20191, United States of America
3	Akima	LUDNH5K4XQU9	2553 Dulles View Drive, Suite 700, Herndon, Virginia 20171, United States of America
4	Amentum	QEMLRQA7PLG4	4800 Westfields Boulevard, Suite 400, Chantilly, Virginia 20151 United States of America
5	AMI Expeditionary Healthcare	DL1VNM64YL14	12030 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 250, Reston, Virginia 20191 United States of America
6	Apex Site Services	P5YZCMJ7QDA8	1300 West Main Street, Suite 305, Waxahachie, Texas 75165, United States of America
7	Aspen Medical	UF3FMLEAWT13	1100 15th St NW, Washington, DC 20005, United States of America
8	Asset Protection and Security Services	HMJ4CBSCDNY4	5502 Burnham Drive, Corpus Christi, Texas 78413, United States of America
9	Bering Straits Professional Services	L8BNTYVF45P7	3301 C Street, Suite 400, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, United States of America
10	Caduceus	ZX23KR32ZH32	1850 Parkway Place SE, Suite 725, Marietta, Georgia 30067, United States of America
11	Centerra Group	H4H3J7SCT76	13530 Dulles Technology Drive, Suite 500, Herndon, Virginia 20171, United States of America
12	CoreCivic	HJGMJN1JL46	5501 Virginia Way, Brentwood, Tennessee 37027, United States of America
13	Cotton Commercial	VPRKW5GS6K17	5443 Katy Hockley Cut Off Road, Katy, Texas 77493, United States of America
14	Deployed Resources	GFTGQRJ8F959	164 McPike Road, Rome, New York 13441, United States of America
15	Deployed Services	T4R2JNL2PKV3	6820 West Linebaugh Avenue, Suite 105, Tampa, Florida 33625, United States of America
16	David Money Group Global	MLLGWJ8ZZS3	4741 Military Trail, Suite 202, Jupiter, Florida 33458, United States of America
17	Emergency Disaster Services	HAK5PNC3GZW5	1385 Pridemore Court, Lexington, Kentucky 40505, United States of America
18	GardaWorld Federal Services	FJLMN2N34M93	1700 North Moore Street, Suite 1875, Arlington, Virginia 22209, United States of America
19	GEO Group	JMLKZZ1NL2Z6	4955 Technology Way, Boca Raton, Florida 33431, United States of America
20	Global Dimensions	QDNZY1MXQUK8	923 Maple Grove Drive, Suite 201, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22407, United States of America

	Offeror Name	Offeror Unique Entity Identifier	Address
21	Gothams	HVR7BYAMSL27	115 E 5th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, United States of America
22	Guardian 6 Solutions	TTLUYN248DA1	1968 W. Belt Line Road, Cedar Hill, Texas 75104, United States of America
23	Industrial Tent Systems	N7GNTMBL69K5	322 Riley Road, Houston, Texas 77047, United States of America
24	InGenesis	PC8MDM9DDWT6	18756 Stone Oak Parkway, Suite 200, San Antonio, Texas 78258, United States of America
25	International SOS Government Medical Services	EEANN2A3SSQ4	1201 Louisiana Street, Suite 500, Houston, Texas 77002, United States of America
26	ISS Action	CN6JHWKMSCD5	204 E Mckenzie Street, Unit E6, Punta Gorda, Florida 33950, United States of America
27	J&J Worldwide Services	Y4TKSMDNTRN6	8350 Broad Street, Suite 1100, Mclean, Virginia 22102, United States of America
28	Kastel Enterprises	SVC5U6D9JNQ5	60 Saint Francis Street, Suite P6, Mobile, Alabama 36602, United States of America
29	KIG Technical Services	Z5JLMFHLJF59	3030 K Street NW, Suite 203, Washington, DC 20007, United States of America
30	LaSalle Corrections	J76AEWGPFT1	192 Bastille Lane, Suite 200, Ruston, Louisiana 71270, United States of America
31	Lemoine Disaster	C182PM2K1463	1906 Eraste Landry Road, Suite 200, Lafayette, Louisiana 70506, United States of America
32	Longview Intl Tech Solutions	CNM4U3TPGUE7	12930 Worldgate Drive, Suite 300, Herndon, Virginia 20170, United States of America
33	Loyal Source	Y54FQAPG4TN5	12612 Challenger Parkway, Suite 365, Orlando, Florida 32826, United States of America
34	Luke	MT3CJ6XGNF8	375 Commerce Parkway, Suite 103, Rockledge, Florida 32955, United States of America
35	MLU	L77SPKGHB5G5	200 Whitehead Road, Bogart, Georgia 30622, United States of America
36	Management & Training Corporation	G58ZEJ7HJGM1	500 N Market Place Drive, Centerville, Utah 84014, United States of America
37	ProTech II	YT2JRNW5CHB3	21145 Whitfield Place, Suite 106, Sterling, Virginia 20165, United States of America
38	Rapid Deployment	K1B6MGA23WL3	1521 Azalea Road, Mobile, Alabama 36693, United States of America
39	Recana Solutions	HT74GJ837NF8	11767 Katy Fwy, Suite 930, Houston, Texas 77079, United States of America
40	Response AI Solutions	ZE2JVFS8ML75	843 Constellation Drive, Great Falls, Virginia 22066, United States of America

	Offeror Name	Offeror Unique Entity Identifier	Address
41	Responsive Deployment	C1G6S1HJFEQ4	400 W. Virginia Street, Suite 100, McKinney, Texas 75069, United States of America
42	Rockwell American Services	H6NCLMPBP565	10849 NW Quail Road, Terrebonne, Oregon 97760 United States of America
43	Security Partners	H9LYJ7TSEH8	366 Merle Gustafson Road, Tallulah, Louisiana 71282, United States of America
44	Sullivan Land Services Co.	F1PMZXNJ7NM5	6702 Broadway Street, Galveston, Texas 77554, United States of America
45	SOS International	L3VCKMD7J585	1881 Campus Commons Drive, Suite 500, Reston, Virginia 20191, United States of America
46	Target Logistics	LLMHPD1Q3X51	9320 Lakeside Boulevard, Suite 300, The Woodlands, Texas 77381, United States of America
47	Telos	JLW7WAKPEKD4	19886 Ashburn Road, Ashburn, Virginia 20147, United States of America
48	U.S. Advisors	UKQUPVHWM6V9	2 Executive Circle, Suite 205, Irvine, California 92614, United States of America
49	U.S. Commercial Diving	DHL2L69BKF75	500 NW 91st Street, Miami, Florida 33150, United States of America
50	USA UP STAR	EQDFVSJ3HGE7	1760 Industrial Drive, Greenwood, Indiana 46143, United States of America
51	V2X	RRFJZGASZJ41	2424 Garden of the Gods Road, Suite 300, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80919, United States of America
52	Vision Quest Solutions	MNA3EF2HHKE5	13212 Commodore Road, Hot Springs, South Dakota 57747, United States of America
53	Xator LLC	ZJFDNMA46LT9	10432 Balls Ford Road, Suite 240, Manassas, Virginia 20109, United States of America
54	Zebra	G5G7HJNJRJN9	310 Haley Meadows Drive, Moncure, North Carolina 27559, United States of America
55	Mercedes Cab Company Inc	NAFMPMUZNN73	182 Queen Anne Road, Harwich, Massachusetts 02645, United States of America

Question. Has ICE conducted any studies to evaluate the feasibility of building new facilities in specific communities, or conducted any environmental impact studies regarding the impact of utilizing existing detention facilities or prisons to detain more individuals as described in the Emergency Detention Related Services sourcing vehicle? If so, please provide the results of the studies, including any environmental impact assessments.

Answer. To date, ICE has not completed any feasibility or environmental studies related to building additional detention facilities, though there are locations where ICE may benefit from such an approach. Generally, the demand for increased detention capacity dictates a response that does not allow for a multi-year site acquisition and construction effort. ICE continues to work to expand detention bedspace across the country through various acquisition methods, primarily by establishing contracts with private entities and entering into Intergovernmental Service Agreements and Intergovernmental Agreements. ICE is targeting areas with insufficient detention capacity as it identifies locations for additional detention beds.

Question. Based on the responses to the Emergency Detention Related Services sourcing vehicle, how many new IGSAs, or direct contracts with private companies,

is ICE considering? Please provide a list of new contracts under consideration, in what region, and the number of beds associated with each new contract.

Answer. ICE is working with the Department of Defense to establish several immigration staging and detention locations on Department of Defense installations. See locations in #3 above.

Question. If ICE is seeking to enter any new IGSA's, will ICE follow all procurement laws and transparency and accountability requirements under the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), which otherwise would apply to a direct contract with a private company?

Answer. ICE will continue to follow all applicable laws, statutes, and regulations pertaining to the solicitation and award of contracts. Intergovernmental Service Agreements are agreements and not contracts subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulations. Intergovernmental Service Agreements will be issued pursuant to 8 United States Code § 1103(a)(1)(A), which allows ICE to enter into Intergovernmental Service Agreements with a State (or political subdivision of a State) to house immigration detainees.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator BRITT. Thank you for the work that you're doing, and this committee hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:48 a.m., Thursday, Wednesday, May 8, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene at a time subject to the call of the Chair.]

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