



Homeland Security

September 29, 2025

The Honorable Donald Norcross
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Norcross:

Thank you for your July 28, 2025 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) enhanced enforcement operations and routine daily targeted operations have resulted in a significant number of arrests of criminal aliens, requiring greater detention capacity. This surge reflects the Trump Administration's commitment to restoring the rule of law and ending the catch-and-release policies of prior years that jeopardized American communities. As part of these interior enforcement efforts, ICE is exploring various options to increase detention bedspace by expanding the use of available space with federal partners such as the U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Department of War (DoW), and the Bureau of Prisons. The Administration remains committed to ensuring that illegal aliens, especially those who pose a public safety risk, are not free to roam the United States.

To this end, ICE is working with the DoW to identify land on DoW installations that may be used to erect temporary immigration detention and/or staging facilities. As part of this plan, ICE is working with DoW to assess the viability of establishing a site at Joint Base McGuire–Dix–Lakehurst in New Jersey to ensure that illegal aliens are securely detained.

Currently, there is no approved construction plan for the location of this facility and no firm timeframe for intakes or length of operation at Joint Base McGuire–Dix–Lakehurst. ICE is working with DoW to determine the appropriate acquisition strategy to support this site. Should a contract be awarded to build and operate a detention facility at this location, the contract will establish the detention standards by which the detention operator will be obligated to abide. ICE defers to DoW regarding the specific site identified to support this initiative and reimbursement and funding related to Joint Base McGuire–Dix–Lakehurst.

Regarding your questions about which illegal aliens will be detained at Joint Base McGuire–Dix–Lakehurst, for aliens not subject to mandatory detention, ICE makes custody determinations on a case-by-case basis, weighing all relevant factors, including risk of flight, danger to public safety, and national security concerns. ICE also evaluates humanitarian circumstances as required by law, including serious medical conditions or primary caregiver status. Consistent with Trump Administration directives, however, ICE is prioritizing the

detention of criminal aliens, cartel-linked traffickers, and others who pose clear threats to the safety and security of the United States.

ICE detainees are provided with access to appropriate process throughout the pendency of their immigration proceedings, regardless of the detention facility. During their removal proceedings, detainees are afforded numerous procedural protections that ensure they are provided notice and the opportunity to be heard. These protections include, but are not limited to, the right to seek representation by an attorney, to contest any charges of removal, to present evidence, and to examine any evidence against them. Detainees are also provided with a list of pro bono legal service providers maintained by the Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review, as well as contact information for the DHS Office of Inspector General, the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility, and consular officials. Additional legal service provider lists are available on the Electronic Law Library, consistent with ICE national detention standards for required law library materials.

ICE national detention standards and other ICE policies require facilities to provide comprehensive medical and mental health care from the moment aliens arrive at a facility and throughout their time in ICE custody. Detainees have access to a continuum of health care services, including screening, prevention, health education, diagnosis, and treatment while in ICE custody. Generally, detention standards require facilities to conduct a medical intake screening (including medical, dental, and mental health) within 12 hours of arrival at a facility and a comprehensive health assessment within 14 days of arrival. Each ICE facility provides access to medical care professionals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Medical care is provided within the facility's medical clinic with access to specialty care and emergency medical services outside the facility. While ICE does not directly provide or direct the medical care in non-ICE Health Service Corps-staffed facilities, the agency oversees those facilities' compliance with national detention standards and coordination of offsite care through medical referrals, as needed, through the Field Medical Coordinator Program.

Your letter asks about the timeframe for processing detainees. The time it takes to arrest, process, and deport an illegal alien depends on various factors, to include the processing pathway (section 240 removal proceedings, expedited removal, stipulated removal, etc.). Processing an alien out of the base will depend on the various factors of each case, but the Department's priority is quick removal to prevent prolonged unlawful presence. ICE maintains several release mechanisms. An alien may be released on bond, order of supervision, or an order of recognizance, or the alien may be released from the facility for removal from the United States. Additionally, some aliens may be eligible for release on ICE's Alternatives to Detention program. The Alternatives to Detention program is not a release mechanism, but a condition for release and provides increased supervision of aliens for whom detention may not be necessary or possible.

Regarding your concerns about the safety of surrounding communities, ICE recognizes the importance of its relationships with its law enforcement partners to carry out its mission. ICE will continue to coordinate with law enforcement partners in a way that best serves national security and public safety, including coordinating with them on scheduled releases of aliens that were in ICE custody. Our foremost obligation is to protect American communities

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Thank you again for your letter. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 447-5890.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kristi Noem', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security