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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology,
and Government Innovation.
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy,
and Regulatory Affairs

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
STRATEGIC COMPETITION
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST
PARTY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0517

January 22, 2026

Secretary Noem
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Office of Legislative Affairs
Mail Stop 0020
Washington, DC 20528

Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs
Enforcement Lyon
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
500 12th Street SW, Mail Stop 5003
Washington, DC 20536-5003

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Lyon:

I write to formally document grave deficiencies observed during my oversight visit to the California City Detention Facility and to demand immediate production of records and explanations. The conditions I witnessed raise serious concerns about conditions of confinement, access to medical care, and the absence of meaningful federal oversight.

We were told the facility currently detains 1,428 individuals, including 215 women—all held solely for civil immigration matters. Despite this, detainees appeared to be treated uniformly as high-security prisoners regardless of security classification or gender and despite the fact that the vast majority have never had criminal convictions. We observed no active recreation and no structured pro-social activities. There is no GED programming, no substance abuse support, and no religious services unless outside volunteers make the trip to the desert. Recreation spaces sat entirely empty. Women housed in low-security units were continuously locked in their cells and appeared to be subjected to identical restrictions as individuals in high-security detention.

During the visit, my staff and I met with 47 detained individuals. Most spoke cautiously, apparently inhibited by the lack of privacy and fear of retaliation. Despite the fact that all visitors are subjected to invasive patdowns and escorts, detainees reported that everyone, even those classified as low-security, are required to meet lawyers and loved ones behind glass and treated as convicted prisoners. Several detained individuals expressed frustration that their mail is often sent and received with long delays (up to several weeks). These all harm individuals' ability to correspond with lawyers and outside support—not to mention loved ones—which reduces their time and ability to prepare for court hearings and sometimes leads to missed court hearings.

The physical conditions of the facility were unacceptable. The temperature was so cold that my staff struggled to take notes, yet neither our ICE escort nor facility staff could identify any policy for providing adequate cold-weather clothing. We did not see a single detained person with a jacket, sweater, or other appropriate clothing.

Detainees reported infrequent access to showers and clean clothing, and staff were unable to produce a laundry schedule. The resulting lack of hygiene was obvious, not least by smell. Despite repeated requests, our ICE escort and facility staff were unable to provide any documentation of food safety inspections, calling into question compliance with basic health standards. One individual who has been held in the facility for months told us the conditions have continued to be so unbearable (some described it as “torture”) that he agreed to deportation simply to escape them.

Most alarming were the failures in medical care and grievance processing. We observed locked “sick call” and grievance boxes but were denied access to confirm whether requests were being addressed. Multiple detainees – including one we personally observed with a serious, visible injury – reported requesting medical care and never receiving it. Both a senior ICE official and facility staff admitted that urgent medical requests and grievances may sit unattended for weeks and are not reviewed on weekends or holidays. Detainees described even longer delays and reported being placed in solitary confinement when they complained of medical needs—an extraordinarily troubling and punitive practice. Facility staff also confirmed that legally required disability services coordinators are not onsite.

Equally disturbing, the California City Detention Facility has operated since August 2025 without a single Office of Detention Oversight inspection, National Detention Standards or Performance Based National Detention Standards audit or inspection, or verified compliance review under the Prison Rape Elimination Act or applicable disability laws. Oversight is not delayed; it is nonexistent.

Accordingly, I request the following records, covering the period from August 1st, 2025, to present, to be produced no later than February 12:

1. The governing contract between ICE and CoreCivic for the operations of California City Detention Facility
2. Any contracts governing the provision of medical care, including specialty care in the facility, and logs documenting the time between each medical request and delivery of care;
3. Complete grievance logs and grievance review policies;
4. All use-of-force logs;
5. Records of imposition of solitary confinement, segregation or isolation, whether disciplinary, medical or administrative in nature;
6. Out-of-cell and recreation time logs;
7. All food safety and health inspection records;
8. All requests for disability accommodations and the responses for each; and
9. Records of detainee participation in any educational or structured pro-social activities or programming;
10. Schedules of any available programming (vocational, educational, substance abuse, therapeutic, self-help, religious, or group otherwise) and records of detainee participation in those offerings.

Congress has a constitutional duty to ensure detention – particularly civil detention – is lawful, humane, and accountable. The Department of Homeland Security must not permit privately operated detention facilities to function without transparency, oversight, or basic regard for human dignity. I expect a complete and timely response.

Sincerely,



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress