

OPENING STATEMENT

I want to start by taking a moment of silence for Lorenzo Salgado Araujo and Joan Sebastián Guerrero, two fathers murdered by ICE in the past week.

Thank you to all of the Members of Congress and witnesses for joining us today.

I am Congresswoman Delia Catalina Ramirez, and I represent the mighty Illinois' 3rd Congressional District.

But the most important thing to know about me is that I am the proud daughter of two Guatemalan immigrants, Luis and Maria Elvira Ramirez.

As a Chicagoan, I know Black and Brown communities are no strangers to overpolicing, surveillance, and criminalization.

And I have had a front row seat as the Trump administration has aggressively accelerated the use of technology and artificial intelligence in its militarized immigration enforcement campaign.

Private companies, like Palantir, ClearviewAI, and Flock Safety, are all amassing record-breaking profits from the surveillance, detention, and deportation of our friends, families, and neighbors.

That is why today's hearing is titled: **"The Tech Behind ICE: Oligarchs, Immigration Enforcement, and the Threat to Democracy."**

Because today is about more than technology.

It's about the billionaires profiting from our pain.

It's about the corruption that enables profiteering.

And it's about the threats to our democracy that an ever-expanding police state presents.

Across the country, ICE and DHS are expanding their use of facial recognition systems, automated license plate readers, social media monitoring, predictive analytics, biometric databases, cellphone tracking tech and massive data sharing networks.

Through these technologies, the government can monitor where people travel; who they communicate with; where they worship; where they work; what they post online.

And AI is being used to process information at an unprecedented scale.

History has repeatedly shown that surveillance of one group rarely stays confined to that group.

The same tech being deployed against immigrant communities today can be turned against journalists, labor organizers, students, faith leaders, protestors, lawyers, and political opponents tomorrow.

That is why Congressional oversight is essential.

We are witnessing a deepening alliance between federal immigration enforcement agencies and the private technology sector.

An alliance that violates our privacy, erodes our civil liberties, weakens our democratic institutions, normalizes mass surveillance, and deepens environmental and social harms in communities across the country.

Billions and billions of our hard-earned taxpayer dollars are flowing into tools to surveil the American people.

Palantir, an AI software company [powering ICE's targeting system](#), has received over \$1.8 billion in government funding since January 2025 alone.

And while Trump, Miller and Markwayne all speed up the expansion of the surveillance state, transparency, accountability, and oversight haven't kept up.

As a result, our communities are being watched, tracked, profiled and targeted with little to no protections or checks to ensure our rights are respected.

But no surprise there.

Since its establishment, DHS has surveilled communities and violated our rights under the pretense of securing our safety. Their use of surveillance technology is just the most recent example.

Today's witness will help us understand what Congress must do to defend our communities and civil liberties from DHS's ever-expanding surveillance state.

I want to thank our witnesses for their willingness to share their expertise and experiences.

I now recognize my co-chair, Rep Hank Johnson, for opening remarks.

CLOSING STATEMENT

I want to close by thanking each of you. Not just for being here today, but for shining light on these important issues.

Today, we heard testimony about surveillance technology that continues to grow more powerful, more invasive, and more obscured - hidden from the light of oversight.

We heard about facial recognition systems; we heard about artificial intelligence, data brokers, biometric databases, license plate readers, and digital tracking tech. But most importantly, we heard about the people being affected by the ever-expanding surveillance state DHS is building.

The threat posed by surveillance, AI, big tech, and the corruption that allows tech oligarchs to profit from our pain are not confined to immigrant communities.

When the government can quietly collect enormous amounts of personal information, analyze it with artificial intelligence and make decisions with limited transparency or accountability, ALL of our rights and liberties are at risk.

DHS has always been a weapon to be pointed against anyone considered a public enemy. So, we must see DHS's surveillance apparatus for what it is: a threat to our democracy, our civil liberties, and our constitutional rights.

We have seen what DHS can do with unchecked power and too little accountability: that track record should move us all to action.

We must strip DHS of any authority to use these systems against us.

But we must also go further. We must abolish ICE and dismantle DHS. Nothing less will stop the harm these systems are inflicting on our communities.

Thank you again to our witnesses and colleagues who joined us today. **This hearing is adjourned.**