

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Mr. David Venturella
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Washington, D.C. 20536

Secretary Mullin and Acting Director Venturella,

We write to unequivocally condemn conditions reported at El Valle Detention Facility and to express our concern about a reported hunger strike involving individuals detained therein.¹ Detainees report enduring inhumane conditions, and a lack of proper nutrition and water. Whether they arose through indifference or inability, such conditions violate the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) inability or unwillingness to uphold their own documented detention standards.

Our offices have received alarming outreach from families of loved ones detained at El Valle Detention Facility expressing concerns over DHS and ICE's failure to provide the people detained there with appropriate care, including:

- Lack of access to potable water and food that does not meet the provision of "detainees with nutritious meals, prepared and served in a sanitary and hygienic food service operation" detention standard;²
- Aggression and mistreatment by guards at the facility, and retaliatory use of solitary isolation for participation in the hunger strike;³ and
- Denial of critical medical care, including lack of access to medications or delays in receiving medications.

Individuals participating in the hunger strike are fighting asylum cases in immigration courts and have been held in detention for months, and in some cases, more than a year, as their cases are being heard, despite having families, community ties, and not posing a threat to public safety.

These disturbing reports come as immigrant advocates have tracked hunger strikes by hundreds of individuals detained at other ICE- or contractor-run facilities across the country this year, including at:

- Folkston D. Ray James ICE Processing Center (Folkston, Georgia)
- El Valle Detention Facility (Raymondville, Texas)
- Montgomery Processing Center (Conroe, Texas)
- Moshannon Valley Processing Center (Clearfield County, Pennsylvania)
- North Lake Processing Center (Baldwin, Michigan)
- Torrance County Detention Facility (Estancia, New Mexico)
- Delaney Hall (Newark, New Jersey)
- Adelanto ICE Processing Center East, West, and Desert View Annex (Adelanto, California)

1 Sandra Sanchez, "Hunger strike reported at immigration detention center," *Border Report*, October 20, 2026, <https://www.borderreport.com/border-report-tour/border-report-live/hunger-strike-reported-at-immigration-detention-center/>; Sabrina Franza, "2 women in Chicago say husbands detained by ICE have gone on hunger strikes," *CBS News*, October 23, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/chicago-women-husbands-hunger-strike-ice-detention-texas-georgia/>.

2 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, *National Detention Standards*, (2026, Revised) <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention-standards/2026/nds2026.pdf>.

3 Sandra Sanchez, "Hunger strike reported at immigration detention center," *Border Report*, October 20, 2026, <https://www.borderreport.com/border-report-tour/border-report-live/hunger-strike-reported-at-immigration-detention-center/>.

- Northwest ICE Processing Center (Tacoma, Washington)
- Prairieland Detention Center (Alvarado, Texas).⁴

Any detention center unable to provide adequate medical care, guarantee safe and sanitary facilities, and meet detained individuals' basic needs should not be authorized to continue operating. Given the significant resources Republicans in Congress have appropriated to DHS and ICE, there is no excuse for facilities failing even to meet the Department's own detention standards.

It is abundantly clear that DHS continues to demonstrate gross disregard for the health, dignity, personhood, and safety of our communities. However, we remain committed to conducting oversight, advocating for our constituents, and pursuing accountability. We demand answers to the questions below no later than November 2, 2026:

1. Please provide a copy of the El Valle Detention Facility handbook.
2. Provide the total number of DHS detainees held at the El Valle Detention Facility from July 2018 to October 2026. Please break down the total number by the number of:
 - a. females;
 - b. males; and
 - c. minors.
3. Provide whether the health care program and medical facility are under the direction of a facility Health Service Administrator (HSA) or Clinical Medical Authority (CMA).
4. Provide the number of health care staff on site, including:
 - a. The number of physicians;
 - b. The number of nurses;
 - i. Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA);
 - ii. Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN);
 - iii. Registered Nurses (RN); and
 - iv. The number of mental health providers available.
5. Provide the number of comprehensive health assessments given to individuals detained from July 2018 to October 2026.
6. What is the process at the El Valle Detention Facility to have detained individuals' medical records released to detainees or their representatives?
7. Provide all current contracts that the facility has with ICE to provide detained individuals medical care, including off-site medical care.
8. As a part of ICE's National Detention Standards, detention centers are expected to provide **at no cost to the individual detained** "medically necessary and appropriate medical, dental and mental health care and pharmaceutical services."
 - a. What is your process for detained individuals to receive the appropriate medication for pre-existing health conditions?
 - b. Additionally, what is the process for receiving medication should medical conditions develop while individuals are in detention?
 - c. What is the process if the individual requires off-site medical care, including emergency care?
 - d. What is the process for detained individuals to submit medical requests? Who assesses them? What is the average time of response to such requests? What is the recourse for detained individuals when processing delays or inappropriate denials mean medical necessities are not provided?

⁴ National Immigration Project, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, National Immigrant Justice Center, Amica Center for Immigrant Rights, Detention Watch Network, Vera Institute of Justice, National Immigration Law Center, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Email to Representative Ramirez's Office, October 19, 2026.

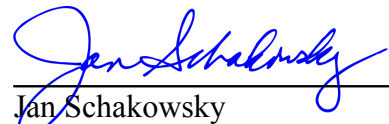
9. How many times was off-site medical care provided from July 2018 to October 2026? What off-site medical care was provided during that time?
10. During the time period of July 2018 to October 2026, how often was necessary off-site medical care ever switched, adjusted, or rejected?
11. Please provide the menu of food options given to detainees at the El Valle Detention Facility, as well as the frequency and minimum caloric and nutritional values of each meal.
12. According to court documents reviewed by The Guardian, individuals detained in ICE custody are being force-fed and subjected to involuntary medical procedures while on hunger strike.⁵ What is El Valle Detention Facility's process and policy for engaging with detainees on hunger strikes?
 - a. Are there plans to force-feed any of the detained individuals in El Valle Detention Facility engaging in the hunger strike? Have any of the individuals detained at El Valle Detention Facility been force-fed? What are the names and medical licenses of the doctors who have approved, or could approve, force-feeding?

People should not be detained in these horrific detention centers—the hunger strikers should be released to their families and we demand that they receive protection from further detention and deportation. We also demand that you refrain from force-feeding any person in your custody. ICE data show that immigrant detention remains at historic highs, with 65,765 immigrants detained as of July 2026 (the most recent available data)⁶, and **at least 60 deaths** documented in detention since January 2025.⁷ According to data⁸, delayed and denied medical care is a leading cause of deaths in detention. Therefore, we demand that you address our request with the urgency and transparency these serious and all-too-often life-threatening concerns deserve.

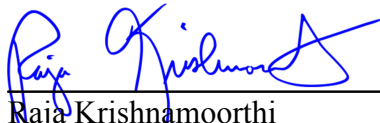
Sincerely,



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

5 José Olivares, “‘Stark example of brutality’: Trump’s ICE used court orders in plan to force-feed at least 10 hunger strikers in detention,” August 3, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/aug/03/trump-dhs-hunger-strikes-force-feeding-ice-detention>.

6 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “Detention FY 2026 YTD, Alternatives to Detention FY 2026 YTD and Facilities FY 2026 YTD, Footnotes,” updated July 20, 2026, https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention/FY26_detentionStats07202026.xlsx.

7 Liam Bowman, “A Maryland woman’s husband died in ICE custody. She wants answers,” *Washington Post*, October 20, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-vb/2026/10/20/maryland-woman-husband-died-suddenly-ice-custody-she-wants-answers/>; Representative Pramila Jayapal, (@RepJayapal), “Today I received notification of the 60th death in ICE custody since Trump returned to office. Sadly, this appears to be a death by suicide. When our country detains people, we have the responsibility of ensuring both their physical and mental health — not driving them,” Twitter (now X), October 24, 2026, <https://x.com/RepJayapal/status/2114118135225647544?s=20>.

8 Physicians for Human Rights, “Dying in Detention: Rising Deaths in an Expanding US Immigration Detention System,” June 25, 2026, <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/dying-in-detention/>.

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JC'.

Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'James P. McGovern'.

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Greg Casar'.

Greg Casar
Member of Congress