

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2026

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

Dear Acting Director Lyons,

We write to express our deep concern regarding reports of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) expanding its detention capacity in Colorado by keeping detained individuals in “holding cells” in ICE field offices for days at a time. Detaining people for extended periods of time in small, confined rooms that are meant to be a temporary holding space goes against Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy, and we demand these actions stop immediately.

In recent weeks, there have been growing reports of ICE keeping detained individuals in holding cells within ICE field offices, which don’t have beds or adequate resources for long-term detention.<sup>1</sup> Reporting indicates that an individual was kept in these rooms for as long as 39 days. According to data obtained by the Deportation Data Project through the Freedom of Information Act, between January and October 2025, more than 3,000 individuals were held in these locations.

DHS has recognized the safety risks of keeping individuals in these holding cells for extended periods of time. Prior to June 2025, ICE did not allow individuals to be left in these holding cells for more than 12 hours. In June, an internal policy was updated to allow individuals to be held for up to three days.<sup>2</sup> We are deeply concerned about the reports that ICE kept an individual in the holding cells for as long as 39 days – well beyond the three-day limit established by the DHS in June, which we also view as unacceptable.

We strongly oppose the practice of detaining individuals for more than 12 hours in holding cells and demand your response to the following questions by March 27th.

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<sup>1</sup> “EXCLUSIVE: Secret ICE Detention Facilities Exist Around Colorado, Data Shows” Colorado Times Recorder. March 4, 2026.

<sup>2</sup> “National Detention Standards” Immigration and Customs Enforcement. 2025

1. Is ICE keeping individuals in holding cells in ICE field offices for more than 12 hours at a time? If so, please provide:

- a) The number of individuals who have been detained in a holding cell for more than 12 hours,
- b) The countries of origin of those individuals,
- c) The locations they were held at,
- d) The length of time that those individuals were in a holding cell, and
- e) If any US citizens were among those detained in the holding cells.

2. If individuals are being held in ICE field office holding cells for more than 12 hours, what safety precautions are being taken to ensure that the detainee's nutritional, medical, and hygiene needs are being met? Please provide the record logs of when agents supplied food, water, and any necessary hygiene and medical assistance to individuals detained for more than 12 hours.

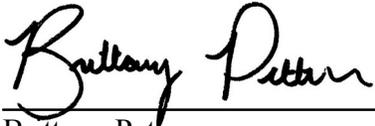
3. When an individual is held in a holding cell, what documentation procedures does ICE follow to ensure that the detainee's location is tracked?

4. When an individual is held in a holding cell, how does ICE ensure that their legal representation can access them?

5. Have any individuals in ICE custody in Colorado been held in a location that is not the Aurora Detention Facility or an ICE Field Office in Colorado? If yes, please provide the number of individuals held, the locations of the warehouses where individuals were held, and a copy of the contracts that ICE has with those locations.

6. Under Colorado HB23-1100, local government entities are authorized to provide health and safety resources and sanitation services to individuals held in detention. How is ICE ensuring that holding cells in field offices comply with local public health and environmental codes? Specifically, what is the protocol for allowing County Health Departments to conduct inspections for sanitation, food safety, and infectious disease control at these locations?

Sincerely,



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Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



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John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress