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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6025
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November 24, 2026

The Honorable Joseph V. Cuffari
Inspector General
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Cuffari:

I write to request an immediate investigation into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) pending acquisition of the Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC) in Tacoma, Washington from the GEO Group, Inc. (GEO), a private prison operator with a record of mistreatment and abuse of people detained in its custody. The NWIPC, assessed by the City of Tacoma to be valued at $72.6 million, is reportedly being sold for $453 million.[1] In a recent press release, GEO states that the company expects to receive approximately $340 million in net proceeds.[2] The Office of Inspector General must investigate this egregious waste of taxpayer dollars, which serves to enrich a private detention contractor to maintain unsafe conditions in immigration detention.

By acquiring the Northwest ICE Processing Center so that it becomes federal property, ICE is attempting to evade oversight over the treatment of people in its custody. This scheme is a blatant attempt by ICE and the facility's operator, GEO Group, to block Washington state from enforcing a state law that allows public health officials to inspect private detention facilities to ensure detainees are treated with basic dignity.[3] In addition to the proceeds from the sale, ICE recently awarded GEO Group a 10-year contract valued at $1.5 billion to continue operating the facility without clarity on how existing substandard conditions will be addressed.[4] In short, taxpayers are sending nearly $2 billion to GEO Group to execute President Trump's cruel immigration agenda.

ICE's use of taxpayer dollars follows a trend of gross mismanagement of appropriated funds that Republicans approved for ICE without any meaningful guardrails. In a September 24, 2026, report, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that "in the absence of a comprehensive strategic plan to guide detention expansion, ICE has wasted funds on

[1] https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/ice-buys-wa-immigrant-detention-center-from-geo-group-for-453m/
[2] https://investors.geogroup.com/news-releases/news-release-details/geo-group-sells-northwest-ice-processing-center-453-million-and
[3] https://governor.wa.gov/news/2026/governor-ferguson-attorney-general-brown-seek-court-order-permit-health-inspections-northwest-ice
[4] https://investors.geogroup.com/news-releases/news-release-details/geo-group-announces-new-management-contract-1635-bed-northwest

unsuccessful detention initiatives and lacks important information about the long-term affordability of its investments."[5] It recommended that "the Director of ICE should develop a comprehensive strategic plan to guide its detention expansion efforts that includes goals, activities, and resource needs," which the agency agreed to but won't complete until August 31, 2027. Even so, and in the midst of a follow-on GAO engagement that would result in its November 19, 2026, report's findings that "ICE has neither determined the scope and costs to purchase more facilities nor updated its spending plan to reflect its current efforts" and "hasn't assessed the cost effectiveness of these investments," ICE is reportedly still moving ahead with this $453 million purchase of a detention facility with seemingly no financial benefit or control.[6]

I call on you to examine the details of the acquisition agreement, particularly how the parties arrived at a sale price more than six times the City's assessed land value for the NWIPC. Additionally, I urge you to investigate whether ICE fully complied with the Federal Acquisition Regulation and other relevant laws, regulations, and policies, including procurement and conflict-of-interest requirements. I further urge you to investigate whether ICE had developed a strategic plan in line with GAO's September 2026 report's recommendation prior to their decision to purchase the Tacoma facility.

This waste and abuse of taxpayer dollars to pursue President Trump and Stephen Miller's cruel and extreme immigration agenda deserves immediate attention before the sale is finalized.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Patty Murray

Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

[5] https://www.gao.gov/assets/900/890554.pdf
[6] https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-27-108665