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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–4704

November 9, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mullin:

I write with grave concern regarding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) efforts to further entrench immigration detention in Washington state for at least the next 10 years. An August 2026 Request for Proposals (RFP) identified the Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC) in Tacoma, WA as one of four "turn-key facility" targets for 10-year-long contracts,[1] and ICE recently awarded a 10-year contract to continue operating NWIPC to the facility's current owner and operator, the GEO Group.[2]

I, along with other members of the Washington and Oregon delegations, have repeatedly raised concerns regarding GEO Group's operation of the detention center and detainees' insufficient access to medical care, inadequate nutrition, and barriers inhibiting attorneys from providing legal counsel to detained clients.[3] Yet, ICE is continuing to arrest and detain hundreds of immigrants in Washington, including those with no criminal conviction, exacerbating conditions in detention and creating additional burdens on the federal and immigration court system.[4]

Washington state and local communities have adopted laws and regulations to ensure the safety of those in detention, protect the rights of employees, and protect public health. The need for these state and local protections has been demonstrated time and time again at NWIPC. The Washington State Department of Health has received thousands of complaints about unsafe and unsanitary conditions in the facility that raise concerns about neglect and cruelty.[5] Notably, GEO Group has been found

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[1] Turn-Key Detention Facilities (Attachment 02a - Facility-Specific Requirements (Requirement D - Seattle)), SAM Acquisition 360 (2026), https://sam.gov/workspace/contract/opp/fcb17f073c12491dab15cef541035acb/view.
[2] Nina Shapiro, ICE awards WA detention center new contract, The Seattle Times (Oct. 29, 2026), https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/ice-awards-new-10-year-wa-detention-center-contract-to-geo-group/
[3] Murray Leads WA Democratic Members in Demanding Answers from ICE on Deteriorating Conditions and Inadequate Food, Medical Care, and Access to Legal Counsel at NWIPC, Senator Patty Murray (Dec. 17, 2025), https://www.murray.senate.gov/murray-leads-wa-democratic-members-in-demanding-answers-from-ice-on-deteriorating-conditions-and-inadequate-food-medical-care-and-access-to-legal-counsel-at-nwipc/.
[4] Gustavo Sagrero Álvarez, New Records Detail ICE Arrests in WA during Summer Surge. Yakima, Seattle Top the List, KUOW (Aug. 29, 2026), https://www.kuow.org/immigration/2026-08-28/new-records-detail-ice-arrests-during-summer-surge-yakima-seattle-top-the-list.
[5] Governor Ferguson, Attorney General Brown Seek Court Order to Permit Health Inspections at Northwest ICE Processing Center | Governor Bob Ferguson, (Apr. 28, 2026), https://governor.wa.gov/news/2026/governor-ferguson-attorney-general-brown-seek-court-order-permit-health-inspections-northwest-ice.

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liable for exploiting detainee workers and unjustly enriching itself through unlawful labor practices at the facility.[6] That decision has since been affirmed by a federal appeals court.[7] Additionally, in a May 2026 report, the University of Washington Center for Human Rights raised serious concerns about the lack of protections against sexual abuse and assault in the detention center.[8]

In 2023, the Washington State Legislature granted public health officials the authority to conduct health inspections of private detention facilities.[9] GEO Group has repeatedly denied state health inspectors access to the facility as the state sought to enforce the law, prompting the state to sue the detention center operator.[10] While that litigation continues, ICE and GEO Group reportedly entered into a temporary contract that contains language purporting to override state and local law and provides significant additional protections to GEO Group, including a provision requiring the federal government to cover the company's legal fees.[11] This language continues a dangerous trend in weakening basic protections for detainees and workers, while shielding private prison companies from accountability for abuse. It also puts taxpayers on the hook for GEO Group's potential legal violations and inhumane treatment of detainees.

Instead of working in tandem with state and local governments, ICE appears to be pursuing a course that would diminish lawful local oversight of the detention facility, evade oversight, and weaken basic protections for detainees and workers. In August, ICE issued the solicitation seeking proposals from contractors, with draft contract language stating that "If any conflicts between federal, state, or local laws or rules arise, the federal rules shall be followed."[12] This language falsely conveys that detainees in ICE custody, employees at the facility, and the local communities affected by the detention operations tied to NWIPC are no longer protected by applicable state and local laws. ICE's effort to rapidly cement the detention center operator contract for another 10 years appears to be an attempt to avoid the necessary public scrutiny that would otherwise accompany the establishment of new detention facilities and operation of these facilities.

Please provide responses to the following questions no later than November 20, 2026:

1) What funds is ICE using or planning to use to fund the contracts resulting from this RFP? Please provide the originating public law with section number(s), appropriation account in which the funding resides, and period of availability for each source of funding.
2) What alternative periods of performance were considered for the Northwest ICE Processing Center? What is the justification for pursuing a 10-year contract?

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[6] *Nwauzor v. GEO Grp., Inc.*, 127 F.4th 750 (9th Cir. 2025) (denying rehearing en banc).
[7] Ninth Circuit Affirms For-Profit Operator of Northwest ICE Processing Center Violated Labor Law | Washington State, (Jan. 16, 2025), https://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ninth-circuit-affirms-profit-operator-northwest-ice-processing-center-violated.
[8] Scrapping the Standards: As ICE Lowers Detention Standards, Documents Reveal Gaps in Accountability for Sexual Abuse, University of Washington Center for Human Rights (May 5, 2026), https://jsis.washington.edu/humanrights/2026/05/05/scrapping-the-standards/.
[9] RCW 70.395.050:, https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70.395.050.
[10] Jaelynn Grisso, What Happens When There's an Assault in Tacoma's ICE Detention Center?, Cascade PBS (July 24, 2026), https://www.cascadepbs.org/the-newsfeed-2/2026/07/what-happens-when-theres-an-assault-in-tacomas-ice-detention-center/.
[11] *Id.*
[12] Turn-Key Detention Facilities (Attachment 02a - Facility-Specific Requirements (Requirement D - Seattle)), SAM Acquisition 360 (2026), https://sam.gov/workspace/contract/opp/fcb17f073c12491dab15cef541035acb/view.

3) Is ICE considering purchasing any existing facilities under the contractor-owned, contractor-operated-and-maintained pricing model required by the solicitation? If so, which facilities or categories of facilities are under consideration?
4) Please describe how existing Department of Homeland Security (DHS) oversight entities, including the Office of Inspector General, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, and the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman, will be resourced to ensure that NWIPC is meeting all detention standards.
5) Please describe how existing medical services will be resourced, including staffing for mental health and behavioral health providers, to ensure that NWIPC is meeting the medical needs of noncitizens in custody. Additionally, please detail how ICE will mitigate the adverse impact of expanded detention operations on the public health of individuals in its custody, employees at NWIPC and the communities located in the areas surrounding NWIPC.
6) Attachment 11 of the RFP permits virtual attorney visitation booths to be used for asylum interviews, credible fear interviews, and immigration judge hearings, and suspends the attorney access performance measures during those uses. How is attorney access measured in those periods? How will ICE ensure compliance with applicable law and national detention standards regarding access to counsel?
7) The performance work statements state that more stringent state or local laws "shall not apply" to contract performance, while Attachment 16 of the RFP requires bidders to write that the facility will be operated consistent with state and federal law. Please explain this inconsistent guidance, as well as expectations for ICE contractors to observe federal, state, and local laws.

Among the wrongly detained at NWIPC are the spouses of American citizens, the parents of American citizens, and immigrants with no criminal record who have contributed to our communities for decades. America should be known for its dignity and humanity, and those values should not disappear at the doors of this detention center.

You and I both know we can enforce our immigration laws in a way that is humane, even-handed, and fair—it is abundantly clear that many in the administration, like Stephen Miller, are intent on weaponizing our immigration system to inflict suffering and cruelty on good people and innocent families. That is not remotely acceptable to me, nor should it be to you.

Nobody in the custody of the United States government should be denied basic medical care, served food that makes them sick, held in isolation for weeks, or worse. The detention conditions under this administration have been nothing short of despicable. And even as this administration has tried to obstruct oversight and conceal its wrongdoing, the American people are already horrified by what little they have been allowed to see. One way or another, the truth will come out and there will be accountability. History will remember who stood in the way of reasonable oversight to cover up egregious violations of human rights.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator