

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

July 15, 2025

Dear Secretary Noem:

We write to condemn the ongoing obstruction and delays imposed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on Members of Congress seeking to exercise their constitutional and statutory oversight responsibilities at ICE and DHS detention facilities. These actions are not only unlawful but also appear to be deliberately orchestrated for political purposes.

Section 527(a) of the *Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024* (Public Law 118-47), which was included in the FY2025 Continuing Resolution (CR), explicitly requires DHS and its components to provide Members of Congress prompt, unimpeded access to detention centers for oversight purposes. The law forbids DHS from using any appropriated funds to prevent Members from entering these facilities or to make any temporary modifications that could alter what visitors observe. Moreover, Members of Congress themselves are not required to provide prior notice before visiting facilities; only designated staff must provide at least 24 hours' notice. DHS's policies requiring your personal approval and a week's advance notice are therefore inconsistent with, and violate, these statutory mandates.

"SEC. 527. (a) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Homeland Security by this Act may be used to prevent any of the following persons from entering, for the purpose of conducting oversight, any facility operated by or for the Department of Homeland Security used to detain or otherwise house aliens, or to make any temporary modification at any such facility that in any way alters what is observed by a visiting Member of Congress or such designated employee, compared to what would be observed in the absence of such modification: (1) A Member of Congress. (2) An employee of the United States House of Representatives or the United States Senate designated by such a Member for the purposes of this section. (b) Nothing in this section may be construed to require a Member of Congress to provide prior notice of the intent to enter a facility described in subsection (a) for the purpose of conducting oversight. (c) With respect to individuals described in subsection (a)(2), the Department of Homeland Security may require that a request be made at least 24 hours in advance of an intent to enter a facility described in subsection (a)."

Furthermore, it has become clear that Republican Members of Congress are able to access DHS facilities with minimal delay or obstruction, while Democratic Members routinely face unreasonable denials, extended delays, and additional bureaucratic hurdles. This partisan discrimination is unacceptable, erodes the legitimacy of DHS, and fundamentally undermines Congress's ability to conduct meaningful oversight.

In addition to these illegal restrictions, Members and their staff have repeatedly experienced extreme difficulty in obtaining any timely or substantive response from DHS when attempting to follow up on visit requests or seek clarifications regarding changing visitation policies. Phone calls often go unanswered, emails remain unreturned, and inquiries are routinely ignored or delayed indefinitely. This lack of communication not only frustrates legitimate oversight but also signals a deliberate effort to frustrate and obstruct Congress's constitutional authority.

We are also deeply concerned about the Department's inconsistent and frequently changing guidance on visitation protocols, which is primarily communicated through postings on the ICE website. This approach is wholly inadequate. Members' offices must receive clear, direct, and timely notifications of any changes or updates to visitation policies to ensure that congressional oversight activities are not impeded by confusion or misinformation.

Congress's oversight authority is clear and non-negotiable. We demand written assurances by Friday, July 18, 2025 that DHS will immediately cease all unlawful restrictions and partisan discrimination, fully comply with Section 527(a) and related statutes, and treat all Members of Congress equally—without regard to political affiliation.

Breaking the law is not only a betrayal of your oath of office, it is an impeachable offense. Failure to provide immediate assurances will leave Congress no choice but to escalate its response without hesitation. Congressional oversight includes but is not limited to withholding all your Department's funding, oversight investigations, and utilizing every legislative and legal mechanism available to enforce compliance and expose this unlawful obstruction.

Sincerely,



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress