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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE
ADMINISTRATION

April 18, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Bondi
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20528

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

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Secretary Noem:

I am gravely concerned that the current anti-immigrant tactics used by the Administration, especially by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE), are endangering all Americans and undermining public safety in our communities. The Administration's attacks on immigrants, whether they have legal status or not, is once again creating distrust among immigrant communities who are increasingly reluctant to report crimes for fear of malicious penalties carried out by the Administration.

As a former 9-1-1 dispatcher for over 17 years, I know that when people are too scared to call the police, crime goes up and our communities suffer as a result. Trust in law enforcement is not just a matter of comfort; it's a matter of public safety. Dispatchers are on the frontlines of fighting crime, and it all starts with gathering information from a caller, regardless of their immigration status.

The Administration continues to demonize immigrants, with daily reports of unlawful detentions and deportations. Immigration has always been the cornerstone of our country, yet the Administration is indiscriminately targeting all immigrants. When a legal Maryland resident was illegally deported to an infamously violent Salvadorian prison, the

Administration has been unwilling or unable to recover him. From targeting immigrant children in schools and churches to undermining the very foundations of our Constitution through attacks on birthright citizenship, this Administration is waging a relentless campaign against all immigrants—forcing every immigrant to question their safety. If a legal immigrant’s life can be destroyed so easily despite safeguards enshrined in law, who can feel safe?

To be clear, the Administration’s actions are compromising the safety of all Americans by fearmongering and scapegoating immigrants. When I was 911 dispatcher, immigrants called in regularly to report crimes, as witnesses and victims. The important information provided by immigrants saved lives, stopped criminals, and helped keep our communities safe. However, when immigration enforcement is stricter and the fear of deportation increases, immigrants are less likely to call 911, assist in investigations, or testify in criminal prosecutions¹. Police officers have reported that ICE tactics are eroding trust in local law enforcement.² Residents are fearful of anyone in uniform, whether they are police officers or ICE agents—for good reason; in Houston, a woman who witnessed and reported a car crash to police had the local officer call federal immigration authorities on her.³ As a result of this mistrust, law enforcement must work harder to apprehend criminals and rebuild trust within immigrant communities—undermining the safety of everyone. All Americans should ask themselves: If you were a victim and the only witness to the crime was an immigrant, would you want that person to call 911 and get help, come forward and testify for you in court, or keep silent out of fear?

Instead of intimidating and terrorizing immigrants, the Administration should follow the rule of law and allow local police to build trust within their communities to enhance safety for everyone. Pilot programs in multiple cities have shown success with U and T visa programs supporting immigrants in coming forward to report crime and foster positive relationships with the justice system. And California’s state laws appropriately balance the need to promote public safety with the need for immigration enforcement.

Regardless of who is in the Oval Office, U.S. residents deserve to feel safe and protected by local law enforcement in their home and communities regardless of where they are from. As

¹ Silver, Nate. "Latinos Report Fewer Crimes in Three Cities amid Fears of Deportation." FiveThirtyEight, accessed April 16, 2025. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/latinos-report-fewer-crimes-in-three-cities-amid-fears-of-deportation/>.

² NPR. "Police Say ICE Tactics Are Eroding Public Trust in Local Law Enforcement." NPR, March 30, 2025. <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/30/nx-s1-5304236/police-say-ice-tactics-are-eroding-public-trust-in-local-law-enforcement>.

³ Houston Chronicle. "HPD Police ICE Cooperation." Houston Chronicle, accessed April 16, 2025. <https://cmf.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/article/hpd-police-ice-cooperation-20264558.php>.

911 operators know, when you are facing the worst moments of your life, you want every witness to be willing to dial 911 and call for help. Only by instilling trust and respect with the immigrant community can we keep all Americans safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Norma J. Torres". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

NORMA J. TORRES
Member of Congress