

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

July 6, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
245 Murray Lane SW  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

We write to express concern about the impact of COVID-19 at immigration detention facilities.

As you know, in our state of New Hampshire, the Strafford County Department of Corrections has a contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to hold immigrant detainees. We understand that the local facility has taken a number of steps to minimize the spread of COVID-19, including halting the transfers of individuals from facilities that have had positive COVID-19 cases, establishing a quarantine unit, testing detainees and staff, regularly screening staff and utilizing negative-pressure cells. We appreciate the transparency of the Strafford County Department of Corrections, both with our Congressional offices and with the public, during this public health emergency. However, despite these measures, two individuals have tested positive at this facility, and we are concerned about the continued infection risk faced by detainees and staff.

We are aware that the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire has ruled that ICE detainees currently being held at the Strafford County House of Corrections can challenge their living conditions at the jail, and the Court has begun an ongoing process to evaluate detainees' individual cases for potential release. We support the individualized assessment of the Strafford County detainees' cases to determine whether release is appropriate per the Court's ruling, and we continue to monitor this process closely.

Furthermore, we are concerned about reports of high rates of COVID-19 infection at detention facilities around the country. As of early June, more than half of the detained individuals who had been tested for COVID-19 had tested positive. As of June 29, ICE reports a total of 2,675 detainees who have tested positive for COVID-19. These alarming statistics demonstrate the continued dangers this pandemic poses for detainees, facility staff and the communities where facilities are located.

We request answers to the following questions:

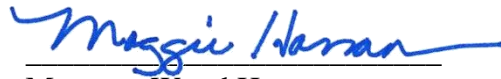
1. What procedures, protocols and criteria has ICE established to determine detainees' eligibility for release?
2. How many individuals have been released by ICE as a result of the COVID-19 health emergency?
3. What steps has ICE taken to ensure contracted facilities have access to adequate testing, and how is ICE working to support contracted facilities with the cost of testing to ensure access?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress

CC:

Matthew Albence, Acting Director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Raymond Bowers, County Administrator, Strafford County, New Hampshire