Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2026

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

The Honorable David Venturella
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Secretary Mullin and Acting Director Venturella:

We write to request more information and seek much needed transparency regarding the ongoing efforts by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to purchase existing immigration detention centers currently owned and operated by private prison companies like GEO Group and CoreCivic. As Members representing the Pacific Northwest, we are particularly concerned about reports that ICE may be looking to purchase the Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC) in Tacoma, Washington, among other immigration detention facilities. With the NWIPC contract set to expire in October, we need to fully understand what ICE intends to do with this facility.

In July, ICE issued a "Request for Information" indicating its intention to purchase detention facilities across the country, listing parameters which NWIPC meets, such as location and number of beds.[1] GEO Group indicated on an investor call they expect to complete the process of price negotiations by the end of September.[2] This would not be the first purchase of a detention facility from a private prison company. Earlier this summer, ICE purchased two CoreCivic detention centers in California for $1.5 billion and facilities in Kansas and Minnesota for $734 million.[3] CoreCivic will continue running the facilities, following the change in ownership.[4] In October, ICE purchased three detention facilities in Adelanto, California from GEO Group for $950 million.[5] GEO will continue running the facilities, and says ICE is considering buying 10 facilities or more from the company.[6]

We are deeply concerned about the potential purchase of these facilities, as it appears to be an attempt to circumvent oversight and accountability at detention facilities. Both GEO Group and DHS have stated that acquiring these facilities is aimed, at least in part, at circumventing attempts by states to conduct oversight at immigration detention centers located within their borders.[7] This admission is cause for significant concern, especially as it relates to

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[1] Gustavo Sagrero Álvarez, *Will ICE take control of the privately run detention center in Tacoma?*, KUOW (Aug. 13, 2026), https://www.kuow.org/immigration/2026-08-13/is-ice-about-to-take-control-of-the-privately-run-detention-center-in-tacoma.
[2] *Id.*
[3] Phillip Wang, *Why ICE Is Quietly Buying Up Private Detention Centers*, TIME (Aug. 5, 2026), https://time.com/article/2026/08/04/ice-detention-strategy-private-prisons-immigration-deportation/.
[4] *Id.*
[5] Andrea Castillo, *DHS buys three detention centers in California for $950 million*, L.A. TIMES (Oct. 5, 2026), https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2026-10-05/dhs-buys-three-detention-centers-in-california-for-950-million.
[6] *Id.*
[7] Wang, *supra* note 3.

NWIPC. Washington State recently prevailed in a district court case seeking access to NWIPC for state Department of Health officials, which is currently under administrative stay at the Ninth circuit.[8] It appears ICE and GEO believe that federal ownership of the facility will shield them from such oversight efforts.[9] This is unacceptable.

And it follows similar actions by ICE to attempt to mitigate state-led oversight in other cases. GEO Group is facing lawsuits in Washington, Colorado, and California regarding its policy to pay detained people who work at its facilities for $1 per day.[10] Washington has already prevailed in court multiple times, with the Ninth Circuit finding that GEO Group's policy led to its "unjust enrichment."[11] In response, ICE, following a request from GEO group, removed language in its detention standards requiring contractors to follow state and local laws regarding the treatment of detained people.[12] ICE changing language on a contract or even purchasing a facility does not override state laws. We are concerned about these latest moves from an administration that claims to be "the most transparent" in history.

States have legitimate reasons to conduct oversight over the immigration detention facilities within their boundaries. As of March 2026, the Washington State Department of Health received over 3,500 complaints about NWIPC.[13] Individuals have reported being sexually assaulted by an officer in their unit; unsanitary conditions, including unclean drinking water, worms, hair, and metal in food, and black mold in showers; and insufficient medical care.[14] State oversight is an essential way to help ensure that the people detained in these facilities at U.S. taxpayer expense are being treated with dignity. Attempting to circumvent such oversight by purchasing substandard detention facilities and continuing to allow such inhumane conditions to persist is unacceptable.

Furthermore, we have questions regarding the pricing of these facilities. Under the Trump administration, GEO and CoreCivic have reaped enormous financial benefits. In 2025, both companies received an additional $2 billion in profit each, representing a 13 percent increase in revenue.[15] Numerous administration officials working on immigration enforcement, including border czar Tom Homan and Acting ICE Director David Venturella, were previously employed by GEO.[16] GEO Group has also hired numerous ICE officials, including Dan Bible

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[8] *Jake Goldstein-Street, WA inspectors must be let inside Tacoma immigrant detention center, judge rules*, WA STATE STANDARD (Jul. 9, 2026), https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2026/07/09/wa-inspectors-must-be-let-inside-tacoma-immigrant-detention-center-judge-rules/.
[9] Sagrero Álvarez, *supra* note 1.
[10] McKenzie Funk, *An ICE Contractor Is Worth Billions. It's Still Fighting to Pay Detainees as Little as $1 a Day to Work*, PROPUBLICA (Mar. 19, 2025), https://www.propublica.org/article/geo-group-ice-detainees-wage.
[11] *Id.*
[12] Douglas MacMillan, *ICE removed detainee protections after private outreach from top contractor*, WASH. POST (Jun. 16, 2026), https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2026/06/16/ice-removed-detainee-protections-after-private-outreach-top-contractor/.
[13] *Northwest ICE Processing Center*, W.A. DEP'T. OF HEALTH (Apr. 2026) https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2026-04/300-069-NorthwestIceProcessingCenter.pdf.
[14] *Id.*
[15] *'If You Can Keep It': The Private Companies Profiting Off ICE*, NPR (Feb. 23, 2026), https://www.npr.org/2026/02/23/nx-s1-5724008/if-you-can-keep-it-the-private-companies-profiting-off-ice.
[16] MacMillan, *supra* note 10.

and Matthew Albence.[17] After ICE massively overpaid for nearly a dozen warehouses across the country, only to then move to offload them at a huge loss to the taxpayers, we are concerned about the risk of price gouging in the purchases of facilities like the NWIPC, which will enrich companies like GEO that contributed over $3.4 million to political election campaigns last cycle.[18]

To further our understanding of the process DHS is undertaking to purchase detention centers like NWIPC, please answer the following questions as soon as possible, but no later than October 27, 2026:

1. Does ICE intend to extend the contract for the NWIPC and will GEO still run the facility?
2. What is the status of contract negotiations for NWIPC?
3. Please provide a list of all detention facilities ICE currently is in the process of acquiring. For each facility please provide when it is anticipated DHS is acquiring each facility.
4. How is ICE determining the appropriate purchase price for these facilities?
5. Does ICE plan to continue having private prison companies administer the facilities it purchases?
6. What is the recusal process for former GEO employees, such as Acting ICE Director David Venturella, from being involved in this process, which will result in a significant windfall to GEO Group?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

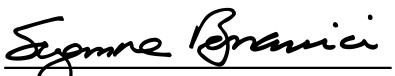
Pramila Jayapal
Ranking Member
Immigration Integrity,
Security, and Enforcement
House Judiciary Committee

Emily Randall
Member of Congress

[17] Nick Schwellenbach & René Kladzyk, *Private Prison Giant Hired ICE Detention Chief*, POGO (Jan. 17, 2025), https://www.pogo.org/investigates/private-prison-giant-hired-ice-detention-chief.
[18] Rachel Maddow, *Why is Trump's DHS wildly overpaying for ICE warehouse detention centers?*, MSNOW (Mar. 31, 2026), https://www.ms.now/rachel-maddow-show/maddowblog/ice-detention-centers-warehouses-corruption-trump-no-kings-rally; Hamed Aleaziz, *ICE Spent $700 Million on 7 Warehouses. Now It Wants to Get Rid of Them.*, N.Y. TIMES (Jun. 18, 2026), https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/18/us/politics/ice-warehouses-immigration.html; GEO Grp.: Recipients, OpenSecrets, https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/geo-group/recipients?id=D000022003 (last visited Aug. 28, 2026).



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



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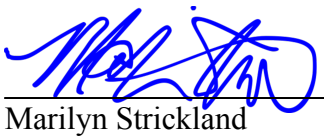

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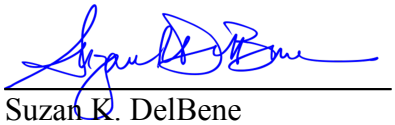

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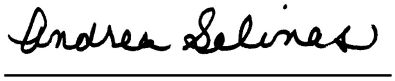

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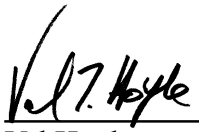

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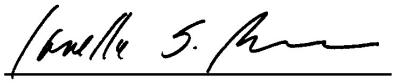

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