

December 9, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem,

We write to demand answers and accountability regarding recent reports detailing the meals being provided to detainees held in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities around the country.^{1,2,3} Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin recently stated to USA Today that ICE detainees “are provided with proper meals (and) potable water” in accordance with national detention standards. However, reporting and firsthand accounts from former detainees detail a lack of food and water, poor quality food that do not meet minimal nutritional requirements or recommended daily allowances, and concerns about requests for medically required meals being ignored.⁴

Over the past few months, ICE has conducted unprecedented raids throughout the nation, rapidly increasing the number of immigrants being detained in federal detention facilities to almost 66,000. With this rapid increase in the number of immigrants being detained, troubling reports concerning the food service being provided in ICE detention facilities have been made public. These aren’t the first reports of poor-quality food and hunger for detainees. A Government Accountability Office report released in May 2025 noted more than 500 deficiencies related to food service.⁵ Given the scale of detention being carried out by this Administration, we urge DHS and ICE to provide answers about food service operations within detention facilities.

It is important to note, detention is a civil, not criminal, process as ICE’s own website notes “Detention is non-punitive”.⁶ While individuals are held in ICE custody, they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, which includes providing all detainees with complete and nutritious meals.

With these concerns in mind, we ask that you respond to the below questions in writing no later than December 19, 2025.

1. How does your agency provide oversight to ensure that food standards are being met in ICE detention facilities?
2. How does your agency provide oversight to ensure that standards for food services provided by contractors are being met?
3. Have there been any investigations into reports that contractors intentionally underfeed detainees in order to drive purchases within commissaries owned or operated by those contractors?

1. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/10/19/immigrant-detainees-hungry-in-ice-detention/86163312007/>
2. <https://www.npr.org/2025/06/05/nx-s1-5413364/concerns-over-conditions-in-u-s-immigration-detention-were-hearing-the-word-starving>
3. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/immigrants-overcapacity-ice-detention-say-hungry-raise-food-quality-co-rcna214193>
4. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ossoff.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/25.10.24_Sen.-Ossoff-Medical-Neglect-Denial-of-Adequate-Food-or-Water-in-U.S.-Immigration-Detention.pdf
5. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-25-107580>
6. <https://www.ice.gov/detain/detention-management>

4. Since January 20, 2025, how many complaints has ICE received regarding the amount, quality, or safety of food provided in detention facilities?
5. How do ICE facilities monitor the nutrition of detainees, including individuals with dietary restrictions, health conditions, or allergies?
6. Please provide the nutritional value of a typical single meal served to detainees — including specific metrics for calories, total fat, cholesterol, sodium, protein, vitamins, and total sugar.
 - a. Do these meals align with ICE's 2025 National Detention Standards?
 - b. How does DHS intend to ensure that meals served at detention facilities going forward meet the 2025 National Detention Standards?
 - c. What protocols are in place to address noncompliance and ensure that food service consistently meets these standards?

Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



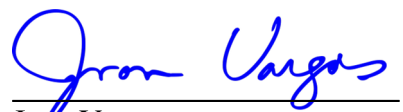
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



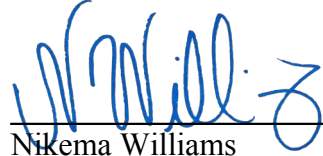
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



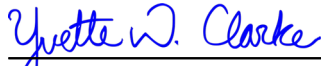
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



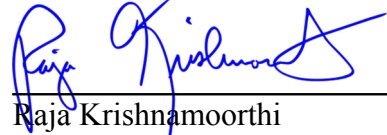
André Carson
Member of Congress



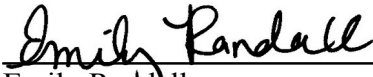
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



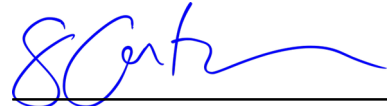
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



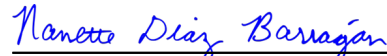
Emily Randall
Member of Congress



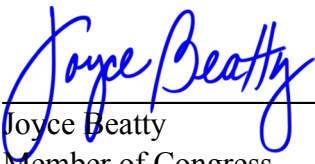
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



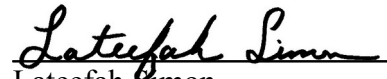
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



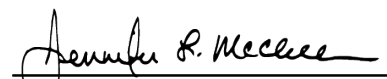
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



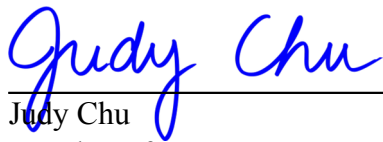
Lateefah Simon
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Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



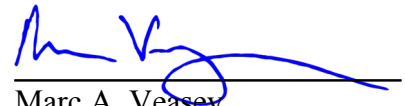
Jan Schakowsky
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Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

