

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

May 13, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Todd M. Lyons  
Acting Field Officer Director  
Enforcement and Removal Operations  
Boston Field Office  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
1000 District Avenue  
Burlington, MA 01803

Dear Secretary Wolf and Director Lyons:

We write to urge Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) to take additional measures to protect the health of our immigrant neighbors. We recognize the important actions your agency has taken to temporarily suspend the requirement that Alternatives to Detention (ATD) participants report in-person for office visits and home visits.<sup>1</sup> These measures will help better protect the health and safety of our immigrant neighbors, their families, and communities at large. Due to COVID-19's rapid spread, increased casualties and the devastating effects on our communities throughout the Commonwealth, we have been troubled to learn that ICE continues to require recently arrived immigrants to report to immigration officials for their scheduled initial check-ins and for some to pay their bonds through in-person transactions,<sup>2</sup> which inevitably places immigrants, in addition to ICE officials, at a higher risk of COVID-19 infection and illness.<sup>3</sup>

Many immigrants can barely afford to get by financially. Stay-at-home orders currently in place make it further difficult to arrange travel logistics or cash payments at a time when it is especially dangerous to do so. We urge you to place an immediate moratorium on all ICE in-person check-ins, including for new border arrivals, until at least August 1, 2020 to ensure the welfare and safety of the general public and the immigrant community. We also reiterate our colleagues' previous request to ICE dated April 3, 2020 to grant broader access to the online eBonds portal, and institute alternate methods of payment that do not necessitate in-person transactions.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, we request your agencies implement the following measures to safeguard our immigrant communities:

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Enforcement and Removal Operations, Online, Updated: May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

<sup>2</sup> Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Enforcement and Removal Operations, Online, Updated: May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

<sup>3</sup> LAUCHAROEN, SHIRA. "IN PANDEMIC, "EVERY TOOL" AVAILABLE NOT ENOUGH FOR IMMIGRANT ADVOCATES". *Digboston.Com*, 2020, <https://digboston.com/in-pandemic-every-tool-available-not-enough-for-immigrant-advocates/>. Accessed 4 May 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Enforcement and Removal Operations, Bond Management Handbook, Effective date: 8/19/2014, ERO11301.1

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1. Adopt and widely disseminate a written policy allowing for bond payments to be accepted electronically or via mail in order to avoid having families and legal representatives of individuals in detention from having to appear in person to complete bond payments.
2. Adopt and widely disseminate a written policy allowing all immigrants with scheduled in-person check-ins (including initial check-ins) to be able to conduct such check ins by phone, email or mail.
3. Establish more effective and consistent methods of notifying immigrants and their attorneys (if applicable) of upcoming appointments. Notifications should be provided 30 days prior to the scheduled check-in and shall clearly notify individuals that they do not need to appear in person and can conduct their check-in via phone, mail or email.
4. Provide clarification to your agency's April 17<sup>th</sup> announcement regarding in-person business. The policy as written is unclear, and continued frequency of in-person business poses significant health risk to both the immigrant community and federal officials. We encourage ICE to develop alternative methods for in-person check-ins through the pandemic. Further, the challenges the pandemic is causing cannot be a method to increase detention levels or deportations.

We kindly request that you respond in writing to this letter with details on how you plan to implement the requested measures.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

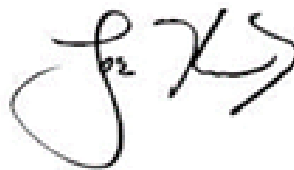


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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

/s/

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



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Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

/s/

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

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/s/  
Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress

/s/  
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

/s/  
William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress