



Homeland
Security

August 8, 2025

The Honorable Edward Markey
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your June 20, 2025 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regarding the Department's use of social media screening and vetting.

DHS's top priority is ensuring the safety and security of the American people. This includes determining whether individuals seeking admission to the United States or applying for immigration benefits are eligible and do not pose a threat to the homeland. Social media screening and vetting may help distinguish individuals of concern from applicants whose information substantiates their eligibility for travel or an immigration benefit. Social media screening and vetting can provide positive, substantiating data, or support a beneficiary's or traveler's application, petition, or claims. It can also be used to identify potential deception, fraud, or previously unidentified national security or law enforcement concerns.

On April 9, 2025, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) updated its existing Enhanced Fraud Detection and National Security social media check policy to include antisemitism as one of the categories of anti-American activity screened for when conducting social media checks on applications or petitions. Under this guidance, USCIS will consider social media content that indicates an alien endorses, espouses, promotes, or supports antisemitic terrorism, antisemitic terrorist organizations, or other antisemitic activity as a negative factor in any USCIS discretionary analysis when adjudicating immigration benefit requests. USCIS does not request aliens' social media information. Adjudicative decisions involving social media information, applications for travel, and immigration benefits are independently reviewed, and a case-by-case determination is made by DHS officers based on the totality of the circumstances. Social media screening and vetting results are one of many factors considered by USCIS and generally do not, on their own, form the basis for an immigration benefit decision.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Visa Security Program assigns special agents to diplomatic posts worldwide to conduct law enforcement visa security activities and provide training to U.S. Department of State Consular Affairs officers regarding threats, trends, and other national security-related topics affecting visa application adjudication. The Visa Security Program's screening and vetting process is a counterterrorism tool to identify,

exploit and disrupt transnational terrorist and criminal networks seeking to harm the United States.

The Visa Security Program does not utilize social media content when conducting screening and vetting activities in support of the U.S. Department of State's (DoS) adjudication of visa applications. Rather, ICE uses social media content only after positive confirmation that the U.S. Government has derogatory information about an alien.¹ Social media content is used exclusively to provide additional context in support of an ongoing investigation to document aliens who have already been confirmed as exploiting the visa process. Determinations for travel, entry, and immigration benefits are made by trained DHS officers and not by computer systems, algorithms, or artificial intelligence.

Between 2016 and 2018, DHS, via the Science & Technology Directorate, coordinated across components for a technology review of social media tools for operational use. In 2021, DHS contributed to an interagency report on Presidential Proclamation 10141, Ending Discriminatory Bans on Entry to the United States. This report covered several topics, including collection of social media handles on DHS forms. DHS cannot release this report without consulting the other agencies that put their operational and classified information into the report.

All DHS screening and vetting activities involving the collection, use, or dissemination of social media identifiers and information are closely scrutinized for appropriate privacy, civil rights and civil liberties safeguards prior to implementation. DHS staff must complete annual training on the operational use of social media and agree to abide by rules of behavior that have been approved by the Privacy Office to gain access to information systems containing social media identifiers and information.

DHS is committed to the highest standards of conduct and fair, unbiased, and transparent enforcement of our mission responsibilities. DHS policy prohibits the consideration of race or ethnicity in our investigation, screening and vetting, and enforcement activities in all but the most exceptional instances.² DHS does not use social media content in a discriminatory manner to prevent entry into the United States or deny immigration benefits based on protected classifications. Consistent with President Trump's executive orders on Combatting Anti-Semitism, Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism and Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats, DHS will continue to enforce all relevant immigration laws to the maximum degree, to protect the homeland from extremists and terrorist aliens.³ DHS defers to DoS for information regarding their regulatory authorities and specific actions related to social media screening and vetting.

¹ ICE Policy 10082.1, Use of Public and Non-Public Online Information, https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/policy/10082.1_UsePublicNonPublicOnlineInfo_06.28.2012.pdf

² *DHS Memorandum, The Department of Homeland Security's Commitment to Nondiscriminatory Law Enforcement and Screening Activities*, April 26, 2013.

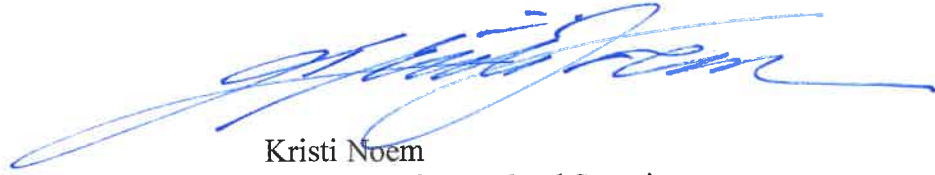
³ [E.O. 13899](#), [E.O. 14188](#), and [E.O. 14161](#).

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Thank you again for your letter. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs via email at CongresstoDHS@hq.dhs.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kristi Noem', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security