

COMMITTEES:

RANKING MEMBER:

SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

RANKING MEMBER:

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PRIMARY HEALTH AND
RETIREMENT SECURITY

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

CHAIR:

U.S. SENATE CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE

United States Senate

SUITE SD-255
DIRKSEN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2107
202-224-2742

975 JFK FEDERAL BUILDING
15 NEW SUDBURY STREET
BOSTON, MA 02203
617-565-8519

1550 MAIN STREET, 4TH FLOOR
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01103
413-785-4610

December 17, 2025

David Wesling
Boston Acting Field Office Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Enforcement and Removal Operations
Boston Field Office
1000 District Avenue
Burlington, MA 01803

Dear Acting Director Wesling:

On Friday, December 12, 2025, I visited the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) field office in Burlington, Massachusetts, where the situation I encountered did little to assuage my profound concerns about the facility and the broader enforcement campaign ICE is waging across the Commonwealth. After weeks of negotiating schedules, I was finally able to meet on-site with you to discuss the treatment of detainees at the Burlington facility and the aggressive enforcement tactics ICE has employed in immigrant communities. I continue to be alarmed by the allegations of overcrowding and inadequate conditions at Burlington, as well as by ICE's arrest dragnet. I write to reiterate my requests for information and to demand that ICE cease its current enforcement approach.

My recent visit follows sustained congressional oversight of ICE's operations at Burlington and disturbing allegations that have emerged throughout the year. In June, I joined the entire Massachusetts congressional delegation in writing to your predecessor, Patricia Hyde, to demand answers about the growing reports that ICE was holding individuals overnight at the facility in deficient conditions.¹ What I saw made clear that this facility is not designed to safely house individuals for more than a few hours. The Burlington field office is a bleak, frigid facility where no one should be held overnight.

During my visit on Friday, I also asked, and was allowed, to look at holding cells, bathrooms, processing areas, meeting areas, and other spaces used for detainee intake and confinement, and to meet with detainees. I further sought answers to questions about reports of inadequate conditions, including allegations about detainees' lack of access to medical attention, showers, and counsel prior to transfer. I specifically asked your office to change its policies to allow for

¹ Letter from Massachusetts Congressional Delegation to Todd Lyons and Patricia Hyde (June 25, 2025), https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_markey_delegation_letter_to_ice_on_burlington_holding_facility.pdf.

in-person meetings between detainees and their counsel, family, and clergy. My visit resulted in some answers, but also more questions. I am following up to request more information and continue my oversight of the reports of bleak conditions at the facility provided by advocates, attorneys, and community members.

The experiences of people processed and detained at Burlington are especially concerning in the broader national policy context. The Trump administration's immigration agenda, which guides ICE's enforcement philosophy, has embraced an extremist, anti-immigrant ideology that treats vulnerable families as political targets, not human beings deserving of dignity. Across the country — and acutely in Massachusetts — this Administration's approach has fanned fear, eroded trust in government, and weaponized federal power against long-settled neighbors who contribute to our communities every day. Burlington is not an aberration; it is the predictable result of a national strategy that prioritizes cruelty over community safety.

Indeed, in Massachusetts, ICE agents are using a dragnet approach to arrests that are sweeping in law-abiding individuals with no threat profile whatsoever. ICE claims it is focused on arresting people with criminal records. We know that's not the case. During the enforcement surge in September 2025, reporting indicates that more than half of those arrested had no criminal records or criminal charges.² Only 2 percent of those arrested in Massachusetts between September 4 and September 30 had convictions for violent crimes, while 63 percent had no criminal charges at all.³ The data demonstrates that the public safety justification ICE repeatedly invokes bears no resemblance to the reality on the ground, a reality that becomes painfully clear through the individual stories emerging from our communities.

The stories of the people your agents are detaining in Massachusetts underscore the devastating human toll of ICE's indiscriminate enforcement tactics. There are instances of immigrants being detained at routine appointments in Burlington.⁴ An eleven-year-old boy from Milford returned home to an empty house after his mother, who had lived in the United States for two decades without a criminal record, was arrested outside a supermarket and swiftly deported; although reunited with her in Brazil, he is now separated from his father and brother.⁵ ICE has arrested several Massachusetts public school students this year.⁶ It detained a pastor and pillar of her community and sent her to a Louisiana prison.⁷ And ICE processed through Burlington a

² Scooty Nickerson, *What the data show about the September ICE arrest surge in New England*, Boston Globe (Dec. 4, 2025), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/12/04/metro/new-england-ice-arrest-data/>.

³ Albert Sun, *Most Immigrants Arrested in City Crackdowns Have No Criminal Record*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 4, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/12/04/us/ice-arrests-criminal-records-data.html>.

⁴ Truman Dickerson, *Springfield man who fears he will be harmed if deported to Ecuador is detained at ICE office, lawyer says*, Boston Globe (Dec. 9, 2025), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/12/09/metro/springfield-fears-killing-detained-ice/>.

⁵ Marcela Rodrigues & Christopher Huffaker, *Under ICE crackdown, thousands of students have left Mass. public schools*, Boston Globe (Nov. 17, 2025), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/11/17/metro/ice-student-arrest-deport-school-enrollment/>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Lea Skene, *Stow church community rallies to support 'loving, caring, hard-working' pastor detained by ICE*, Boston Globe (Dec. 3, 2025), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/12/03/metro/pastor-immigration-detention/>.

Babson College freshman traveling to surprise her family for Thanksgiving and deported her to Honduras within days.⁸ These cases, along with numerous reports of collateral arrests, reflect not targeted enforcement but a policy of instilling indiscriminate fear.

These stories demand scrutiny of the dangerous and aggressive tactics on which ICE relies to execute arrests. We have seen ICE officers operating without transparency or accountability: agents conducting arrests in plain clothes, shielding their faces, and failing to properly identify themselves or their agency affiliation. They are also continuing to employ unprecedented and dangerous tactics to arrest immigrants. In one case, in Malden, masked federal agents reportedly rammed their car into that of Edgar Hernan Elias Escobar as he drove to work, smashed his car window, and pointed a stun gun at him.⁹ In another, a Fitchburg man reported that agents pushed him, hit him near his ribs, pressed on his neck, and caused him to lose consciousness as he clutched his wife and young daughter.¹⁰

These incidents reflect an agency operating far beyond acceptable standards, which brings me back to the questions I raised during my visit on December 12. I asked about specific Massachusetts cases of excessive force, ICE's sweeping operations, and the lack of transparency surrounding arrests and detention practices. I remain deeply concerned about the tactics being used and the impact on Massachusetts communities. Advocates have labeled the degree of terror in communities across the region as unprecedented. Fear has spread so profoundly that when word of an arrest circulates, school attendance drops as families fear their children being detained. Workers are afraid to go to their jobs. Families remain behind locked doors.

ICE's alarming conduct throughout the Commonwealth demands explanation and accountability. I expect written answers to the following questions by December 31, 2025.

1. How many individuals has the ICE field office in Burlington processed this calendar year?
 - (a) What is the highest number of people detained at the field office since the start of the year?
 - (b) How many individuals has ICE held at the facility overnight this year? How many have been held longer than 72 hours?
 - (c) What is the highest number of individuals held overnight in one room?
 - (d) Do detainees always get a mattress if held overnight?
 - (e) How many individuals processed by the field office this calendar year have violent criminal convictions?

⁸ Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio, *A Babson College student wanted to surprise her family for Thanksgiving. She was deported instead*, Boston Globe (Nov. 26, 2025), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/11/25/metro/babson-college-freshman-deported/>.

⁹ Sean Cotter, *Malden woman pleads for return of husband taken by ICE on way to work*, Boston Globe (Sept. 19, 2025), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/09/19/metro/malden-ice-arrest/>.

¹⁰ Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio et al., *'I wasn't letting go of my wife': Video shows ICE agents in Fitchburg struggling with man having apparent seizure, holding toddler in car*, Boston Globe (Nov. 7, 2025), <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/11/07/metro/fitchburg-video-seizure-immigration/>.

2. Is every individual held at the Burlington facility properly recorded in the Online Detainee Locator System?
3. Has the ICE field office in Burlington detained individuals in vulnerable groups overnight, including minors, seniors, pregnant or nursing women, or disabled individuals?
 - (a) If so, how many individuals in each of these vulnerable groups has the ICE field office detained overnight?
 - (b) Does the facility provide special accommodations for vulnerable groups?
4. What is the process by which detainees can request medical care?
 - (a) Given that the ICE field office does not have on-site medical personnel, where do detainees receive medical care?
 - (b) How are detainees provided appropriate medication?
5. I understand from my visit that there is one shower in the facility. Does ICE allow detainees to use this shower if held overnight?
6. What is the field office's practice regarding access to drinking water?
 - (a) Are requests for water outside mealtimes permitted?
 - (b) Does the field office currently accept donations of food, water, or hygiene products? If not, will it change its policy to accept such donations?
7. What is the field office's position regarding the right to counsel for individuals processed and/or detained at the facility?
 - (a) Does the field office grant attorneys the right to meet with clients on-site? If so, what is the duration of permitted meetings? If not, will it change its policy to do so?
 - (b) Does the field office work with language interpreters? What languages are available?
8. Does the field office currently allow family members and members of the clergy to meet with detainees? If not, will it change its policy to do so?
9. What steps is the field office taking to ensure that ICE agents are not engaging in excessive use of force when conducting enforcement operations?
 - (a) Has your office provided agents with training regarding the proper use of force?
 - (b) What actions are taken against agents who fail to follow proper protocol regarding the use of force?

10. How many immigration enforcement actions have taken place near protected, or sensitive, locations in the Commonwealth this year, including at schools, places of worship, courtrooms, hospitals, etc.?
 - (a) Please identify the number of enforcement actions for each type of location?
 - (b) Can you provide any guarantees that your agents will not conduct enforcement operations at or near these sensitive locations?
 - (c) Has your field office received specific guidance from ICE to arrest or detain individuals who show up for routine check-ins at the field office even if they are in full compliance with the terms of their release?
11. How many minors (i.e., individuals under the age of eighteen) has ICE arrested in Massachusetts this calendar year?
12. What guidance have you or your office provided ICE agents regarding how to identify themselves during enforcement operations? Will you commit to instructing your agents not to use masks or other face covering during enforcement actions?

ICE's conduct in Massachusetts threatens the safety, dignity, and rights of families across our state. Congress has a statutory responsibility to oversee federal agencies, and ICE has a statutory obligation to comply with that oversight. The people of Massachusetts deserve transparency, not terror; oversight, not obstruction; and a federal government that protects their rights rather than one that preys upon their communities. I will continue to use every oversight tool available to ensure that ICE meets its legal obligations and treats every individual in its custody with humanity and care.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator