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CHELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1ST DISTRICT MAINE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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September 22, 2025

Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem,

As you know from your time in the U.S. House of Representatives, providing casework and acting as an intermediary to executive agencies is one of the most fundamental services we provide for our constituents, ensuring that the government serves the people it represents. My office frequently assists constituents with immigration petitions pending with your agency—including adjustments of status, naturalization, and non-immigrant visa petitions—that have been delayed or lost. I take immense pride in my ability to serve the thousands of Mainers who have sought assistance from my office.

Moreover, robust casework functions to directly support Congress's oversight responsibilities. Elevating constituent concerns provides valuable insights into how federal programs are being implemented on the ground. It can also reveal systemic inefficiencies, inequities, and gaps in service that may warrant legislative or administrative attention.

It is within this oversight capacity that I raise alarm about several reports from my district that attorneys have not been permitted to accompany their clients to routine check-in visits at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities. Blocking access to legal counsel is incompatible with our values as a nation—as well as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s stated commitments to transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. If DHS or ICE maintain such a stance, I ask that you provide in writing the policy that allows for legal counsel to be turned away from your facilities. Further, should this policy exist, it raises significant questions about transparency and the right to representation. I strongly urge you to repeal any policy that would deprive individuals of their constitutional right to due process.

In service of my oversight responsibilities, I request your assistance in scheduling a tour in the coming weeks of the ICE field office within my district in Scarborough, Maine. In accordance with this request, I wish to stress the importance of the Department's responsibility to engage with and be responsive to the local communities in which ICE facilities operate. It has been brought to my attention that officials from the Town of Scarborough have made efforts to engage with the ICE facility in the Town, but have yet to be

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allowed entry. Clear and consistent communication with community leaders, advocacy organizations, and local officials fosters greater transparency and ensures that enforcement operations are implemented fairly and humanely. Without these relationships, DHS risks deepening mistrust and eroding the very public confidence it requires to operate effectively.

I respectfully request a written response to this letter no later than 30 days from receipt. Please provide confirmation of whether a policy exists prohibiting legal counsel from attending routine ICE appointments, and if so, its legal justification. My office will also follow up on scheduling a visit to the Scarborough, Maine facility as soon as possible.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these matters. Congress will continue to closely monitor the Department's responsiveness, and I fully expect your office will take the necessary actions to address these concerns. Please reach out to my office at (202) 225-6116 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress