

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2026

The Honorable Kristi Noem  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Todd M. Lyons  
Acting Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons:

We write following our February 17, 2026, visit to the North Lake Processing Center in Baldwin, Michigan to raise a number of grave concerns about what we saw and heard at the facility and once again demand a response to our December 23, 2025, letter regarding the death of Mr. Nenko Gantchev and the overall treatment of detainees at the facility.

As you know, we wrote on December 23, 2025, asking crucial questions about the treatment of Mr. Gantchev in the hours leading up to his death in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody, and since then, we have witnessed ICE continue to act recklessly, killing two civilians—Renee Good and Alex Pretti—in Minneapolis, and causing chaos in cities throughout the country. To date we have received no formal response from ICE or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to our letter, despite the extremely serious nature of the inquiry. Even after our visit to the facility, many of our questions on procedures around medical care, preventing death in custody, and the overall treatment of detainees at the facility remain unanswered.

This is especially disturbing following our February 17, 2026, visit to the facility where we saw and heard firsthand that:

1. Detainees live in a constant state of fear inside the facility;
2. Many detainees do not have a clear understanding about the reasons for their detention, their due process rights, or what will happen to them next;
3. Detainees are being held at the facility for varying, unpredictable ranges of time, including six months or more;
4. Detainees fear retribution for speaking out about conditions at the facility;
5. Detainees and visitors are routinely denied privacy and must conduct all conversations under the supervision of facility staff;
6. Detainees reported being held in solitary confinement for unclear reasons, facing severe conditions, including extreme temperatures; and

7. Facility leadership lied about the status of a detainee who was in solitary confinement and not at the medical center.

During our visit to the facility, we were told that over 100 detainees signed up to speak with us about their experiences inside the facility. We were allowed to see fewer than 10 before our visit was cut short, including a pregnant woman and a man who was too afraid to provide details about facility conditions while ICE staff were listening in. When we requested to speak to the detainees without ICE supervision in the room, we were denied.

Additionally, one detainee we spoke to told us about his time “in the hole,” a term used to describe solitary confinement or “segregation.” During our visit, we were not able to get answers on what behavior or policies warrant a detainee being put in segregation for disciplinary purposes. A review of ICE detention statistics online show that 14 people were placed in segregation at the North Lake Detention Center in January 2026, twice as many instances as in the fourth quarter of 2025.

As such, as we continue to work on legislative action to rein in ICE, we again ask our unanswered questions from our December 23, 2025, letter and pose new ones we have after our visit.

1. During Mr. Gantchev’s detention at North Lake, were any complaints logged on the treatment, either for basic needs, accommodations, or medical care, by Mr. Gantchev or by others on his behalf? If so, please describe how those complaints were investigated and what remedial actions were taken.
2. How is ICE fulfilling the required medical screening, care, and supervision of any medical needs of detainees at North Lake, especially in light of the rapid population increase at the facility since reopening? Please provide a description of the current and future expected staffing of medical professionals to fulfill such required medical care.
3. Please provide a copy of all policies and procedures for medical screening and response currently in place.
4. Please provide the number of detainees currently being housed at North Lake who have lodged a complaint or request pertaining to medical care.
5. How is ICE meeting requirements related to mandatory basic need care, including safe accommodations, at North Lake, especially in light of the rapid population increase at the facility since reopening? Please provide a description of the current and future expected staffing of required professionals to fulfill such functions.
6. Has ICE investigated any complaints regarding the conditions at North Lake? If so, how many? Please provide a detailed description of the complaints received, the steps taken to investigate them, and any corrective actions implemented as a result.

7. What complaints have been received regarding solitary confinement conditions? Please detail the complaints, including those regarding temperature.
8. How many detainees have been housed in solitary confinement since the reopening of the North Lake Correctional facility in 2025?
9. Please provide a copy of all policies and procedures for solitary confinement and disciplinary action currently in place.
10. What procedures prevent detainees from speaking with members of Congress without the presence of DHS staff?

In addition to answers to these critical questions, we also make the following demands:

1. Members of Congress must be granted access to the North Lake Processing Center and other similar detention centers without prior notice to execute our Constitutional oversight duties on behalf of our constituents.
2. Members of Congress must be allowed to speak with detainees at the North Lake Processing Center and other similar detention centers without supervision from facility or DHS staff. Detainees must not face any form of retaliation for speaking to Members of Congress.

Please respond no later than Friday, March 6, 2026. We all believe in a secure border, but securing our border does not require abandoning our commitment to the rule of law and protecting and honoring human dignity. Indeed, DHS and ICE have a statutory mandate, internal policy obligations, and a fundamental duty to ensure the safety and humane treatment of individuals in their custody.

Sincerely,



Hillary Scholten  
Member of Congress



Haley Stevens  
Member of Congress