

May 11, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR: All ICE Personnel

FROM: Todd M. Lyons  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

SUBJECT: Restoring Order and Integrity to Congressional Visits to Detention Facilities

Background:

Since President Donald J. Trump was inaugurated as the 47<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, ICE has provided a historic level of access to its facilities and transparency regarding its operations for members of Congress and their staff.

The numbers demonstrate this beyond any dispute. In the 10 fiscal years prior to Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, ICE executed roughly 45 congressional facility visits per year. In FY 2025, congressional visits more than tripled, as ICE executed more than 160 congressional visits, more than 150 of them after President Trump took office. In FY 2026, as of May 11, 2026, ICE had executed approximately 200 congressional visits—*even with no visits occurring from October 1- November 12, 2025, due to a lapse in appropriations.*

These visits are disruptive and resource-intensive, pulling officers and agents away from their law enforcement responsibilities and security posts. ICE detention standards require tours be scheduled outside of times when facility movement is stopped, such as during security inspections that cover every area of the facility, and during population counts which have strict procedures to follow. Tours must also take into account restricted and sensitive locations and minimal disruption to essential services, programs, and privacy, such as legal visits, medical care, detainee housing units, and the Special Management Unit.

The disruption to operations has worsened due to the behavior of members and staff themselves, to include: instances of a staffer entering a facility wearing smart glasses that allowed for clandestine filming of the facility; a House member taking pictures of holding rooms; a House member refusing to relinquish cellular devices; and a House member refusing a required security screening despite clear notification and posted signs that these devices and actions were not permitted for the safety, security, and order of the facility, and to protect the privacy of those in custody, visitors, and the employees, contractors, and volunteers working in these facilities. Moreover, these are not the only burdens created by these visits—which ICE is still executing, consistent with existing court orders.

Currently the agency *is facilitating meetings between detainees and members of Congress and their staff*, despite the lack of any statutory or regulatory requirement that the agency does so. In practice, congressional members or staff provide a list of specific detainees they wish to meet, or ask ICE personnel to proactively identify aliens of particular demographic groups or those arrested in specific operations, or require ICE to post sign-up sheets to find aliens for them to meet. This is an unsustainable burden for ICE employees and a hindrance to ICE operations given the exceptional growth in congressional visits. Recent congressional visits have included requests to meet with large numbers of detainees and to identify individuals based on specific demographic or enforcement criteria. As a result, over 150 detainees at the Dilley facility, 365 at the Northwest ICE Processing Center, and 385 at the Prairieland Detention Facility signed up to meet visiting representatives. Additional requests have asked ICE to identify female detainees held for several months, those arrested during Operation Metro Surge at Camp East Montana, and detainees arrested at specific times and locations at Delaney Hall.

Such requests are impractical and require substantial time and resources to adjudicate. ICE cannot accommodate congressional meetings with hundreds of detainees without significant disruption to facility operations. Facility personnel should not be expected to develop processes to facilitate these requests, nor to proactively identify individuals based on demographic or enforcement criteria, as this detracts from their core mission and is not a reasonable use of staff time or taxpayer resources when neither law nor ICE's national detention standards require facilitation of such visits.

Additionally, open-ended and non-specific requests for alien engagement in detention facilities effectively shift to ICE the responsibility of supporting congressional members in performing their legislative duties. This creates a separation of powers issue, as it requires an executive branch agency to facilitate oversight activities that fall outside its core law enforcement mission.

Such open-ended solicitations are also unnecessary. Aliens in ICE custody already have ample opportunities to communicate with members of Congress and can directly contact congressional offices to request meetings or assistance. ICE Office of Congressional Relations (OCR) routinely receives inquiries from Capitol Hill staff seeking updates on specific aliens' status or health. These requests are accompanied by privacy waivers signed by the alien, typically after the alien or a family member has reached out to the congressional office for assistance.

Another avenue through which congressional members and staff may meet with detainees is during each ICE facility's general visitation hours. These hours vary by facility and ensure detainees are able to meet with friends, family, religious leaders, or any other individual

with whom they wish to meet. It is incongruous that ICE would allow congressional members or staff greater access to detainees than even their families enjoy.

### Policy

Accordingly, I am announcing the following change to ICE policy, effective immediately:

**ICE will now only facilitate meetings with detainees during congressional visits if those aliens are specifically identified by the requesting office to ICE OCR by name, in a manner consistent with existing ICE policy, which requires detainee meeting requests be made at least two (2) business days prior to the visit. The requesting office must also submit valid proof of the alien's consent to the meeting, such as a signed ICE Form 60-001.**

This new policy is consistent with all applicable laws and court orders, and better balances ICE's operational requirements to maintain the safety, security and order of our facilities with the high level of care we consistently provide to detainees in our custody and our obligations to support legitimate congressional oversight efforts.

### No Private Right

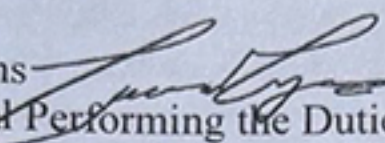
This document provides internal ICE policy guidance, which may be modified, rescinded, or superseded at any time without notice. This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person. Likewise, this guidance places no limitations on the otherwise lawful enforcement or litigative prerogatives of DHS.



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