

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 13, 2026

The Honorable David J. Venturella
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Acting Director Venturella:

I write to request information on the diversion of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel and resources away from essential efforts to combat transnational criminal organizations and stop illegal fentanyl from reaching American communities. According to an August 2026 report from the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), an ICE component responsible for investigating and disrupting transnational criminal organizations, has significantly reduced its work to combat fentanyl since the start of the Trump Administration, which in turn has led to fewer HSI fentanyl investigations and fewer seizures of this deadly drug.¹

HSI has unique legal authorities that give it the ability to combat illegal fentanyl at every step of the supply chain and conduct complex investigations that involve money laundering, drug cartels, weapons trafficking, human smuggling, and other elements of transnational organized crime.² Yet according to the DHS OIG, in FY 2025 (October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025), HSI's work to combat fentanyl trafficking decreased significantly compared to the previous fiscal year. Fentanyl investigations that HSI conducted fell by 24 percent, fentanyl seizures fell by 39 percent, and investigative hours devoted to fentanyl fell by approximately 30 percent (a decrease of more than 250,000 hours).³ During this same time period, the Drug Enforcement Administration saw a 25 percent increase in the amount of fentanyl powder that it seized, which raises the concern that HSI's decreased results in combatting fentanyl trafficking

¹ Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, *ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States* (OIG-26-23) (Aug. 2026).

² U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, *Strategy for Combatting Illicit Opioids* (Sept. 19, 2023).

³ Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, *ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States* (OIG-26-23) (Aug. 2026).

have been based on a reallocation of priorities and personnel within ICE, rather than a decrease in the threat to Americans from fentanyl and transnational criminal organizations.⁴

Consistent with this data, HSI agents have described changes in priorities under the Trump Administration that have come at the expense of countering fentanyl and other missions.⁵ At one HSI office that the OIG reviewed, for example, “approximately 99 percent of HSI’s work was dedicated to immigration, leaving almost no capacity for fentanyl investigations.”⁶ At another office, a seven-agent drug investigation team was reportedly reduced to approximately two agents after personnel reassignments.⁷ These findings raise concerns about ICE’s current priorities and management of HSI’s specialized investigative workforce, specifically that ICE has deprioritized its efforts to combat the trafficking of fentanyl, a drug that has killed hundreds of thousands of Americans.⁸

Further, ICE’s response to the DHS OIG report indicates a lack of urgency to take corrective action and refocus agency resources. Although ICE concurred with the DHS OIG’s recommendation to review staffing “to ensure an appropriate level of coverage commensurate with the relative priority of fentanyl investigations,” it does not anticipate completing this staffing review until July 2027.⁹ Similarly, the DHS OIG found that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) “did not always refer fentanyl seizures to HSI, thereby limiting HSI’s ability to pursue fentanyl-related leads.”¹⁰ CBP and ICE leadership concurred with the DHS OIG’s

⁴ Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, *ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States* (OIG-26-23) (Aug. 2026).

⁵ Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, *ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States* (OIG-26-23) (Aug. 2026).

⁶ Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, *ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States* (OIG-26-23) (Aug. 2026).

⁷ Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, *ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States* (OIG-26-23) (Aug. 2026).

⁸ Government Accountability Office, *Fentanyl Continues to Be the Leading Cause of Overdose Deaths. What’s Being Done to Combat Trafficking into the United States?* (blog) (Sept. 4, 2025) (www.gao.gov/blog/fentanyl-continues-be-leading-cause-overdose-deaths.-whats-being-done-combat-trafficking-united-states).

⁹ Department of Homeland Security, *Management Response to Draft Report: “ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States,”* (Project No. 25-022-AUD ICE) (June 29, 2026).

¹⁰ Department of Homeland Security, *Management Response to Draft Report: “ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States,”* (Project No. 25-022-AUD ICE) (June 29, 2026).

recommendation to update these referral policies, but similarly do not plan to complete this work before July 2027.¹¹

In recent years, ICE has become the highest-funded federal law enforcement agency, with more than \$100 billion in new funding since 2024 – 10 times its historical annual budget.¹² The DHS OIG findings described above, however, raise significant concerns that ICE is neglecting its counter-fentanyl and counter-cartel missions. To assist Congress in its oversight of these critical homeland security missions, please provide the following documents and information as soon as possible, but not later than September 25, 2026:

1. For each month from January 2025 through the date of your response, please provide, by HSI field office and job series:
 - a. The number of special agents, criminal analysts, and other investigative personnel assigned to fentanyl or other narcotics investigations;
 - b. The number assigned to immigration enforcement or immigration-related investigations; and
 - c. The number reassigned, detailed, surged, or otherwise temporarily diverted from narcotics investigations to any other mission, including the dates, and duration of each such reassignment.
2. For the same period, please provide monthly investigative hours, by field office, investigative program or case category, and job series, devoted to:
 - a. Fentanyl and other narcotics;
 - b. Immigration enforcement;
 - c. Human trafficking and human smuggling;
 - d. Child exploitation;
 - e. Financial crimes and money laundering;
 - f. Cybercrime;

¹¹ Department of Homeland Security, *Management Response to Draft Report: “ICE Homeland Security Investigations Hindered in Countering Fentanyl Entering the United States,”* (Project No. 25-022-AUD ICE) (June 29, 2026).

¹² United States Senate Committee on the Budget – Minority: *After Republicans Gave ICE, CBP \$70 Billion in New Funding Bill, Agencies Continue to Sit on \$95 Billion from Previous Funding Bill* (June 23, 2026); Congressional Research Service, *Understanding the FY2026 DHS Budget Request* (R48704) (Sept. 5, 2026).

- g. National security investigations;
 - h. Election integrity; and
 - i. Any other major HSI investigative category tracked by ICE.
- 3. For the same period, please provide, by month and field office:
 - a. Fentanyl investigations opened and closed;
 - b. Fentanyl seizures, by weight and dosage units where applicable;
 - c. Arrests, indictments, and convictions associated with HSI fentanyl investigations;
 - d. Controlled purchases and controlled deliveries involving fentanyl;
 - e. Transnational criminal organizations disrupted or dismantled through HSI fentanyl investigations; and
 - f. Investigations suspended, delayed, reassigned, or closed because of personnel or resource limitations.
- 4. For the same period, please provide all HSI monthly investigative statistic reports and/or dashboards created for ICE leadership at the Associate Director-level or above, and/or Department of Homeland Security (DHS) headquarters.
- 5. Please identify each ICE or DHS official who approved HSI personnel diversions from fentanyl or narcotics investigations to other missions since January 20, 2025, and describe the criteria used to determine which agents or units would be reassigned. Please describe any arrest targets, quotas, performance measures, deployment requirements, or other metrics that influenced those decisions.
- 6. Please describe any minimum staffing levels, staffing floors, exemptions from reassignment, or other policies currently in place to protect fentanyl investigation teams from diversion to unrelated missions. If no such safeguards exist, please explain.
- 7. Please provide ICE's implementation plan and timeline for the DHS OIG recommendation concerning staffing levels, including all milestones preceding the June 30, 2027, target date. Please explain why ICE requires until June 30, 2027, to complete this review and identify the interim actions ICE will take to restore fentanyl investigative capacity before that date.
- 8. Please provide ICE's implementation plan and timeline for the DHS OIG recommendation concerning CBP referrals, including all milestones preceding the June 30, 2027, target date. Please explain why ICE requires until June 30, 2027, to

update referral policies and identify the interim actions ICE will take to improve coordination with CBP before that date.

9. Please identify any new categories of investigations or operational responsibilities assigned to HSI since January 20, 2025, including investigations of assaults on DHS personnel. For each category, provide the number of HSI personnel by job series, and investigative hours devoted to the activity and identify whether personnel were reassigned from fentanyl or other narcotics investigations to perform that work.

Data should be provided in a searchable, machine-readable format, including Excel or CSV files where applicable, and should not be aggregated nationally when field-office-level information is maintained. Please produce responsive records on a rolling basis as they become available.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these matters. If you have any questions related to this request, please contact [REDACTED] Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator