



**One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515**

August 9, 2019

Mr. Matthew Albence
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Acting Director Albence:

I write to express my outrage regarding the recent raids conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Mississippi which left an unknown number of children without their parents.

On Wednesday, August 7, 2019, ICE and the U.S. Attorney's office conducted worksite enforcement operations in seven locations across Southern Mississippi. This operation resulted in the arrest of 680 undocumented workers and was touted as the largest single-state immigration enforcement operation in the United States. Given that these arrests were purportedly the result of a year-long investigation, it is extremely concerning that ICE seems to have ignored its own guidelines to minimize the impact on children and the broader community when it planned this raid.

As you should know, ahead of raids that will result in the arrest of more than 150 individuals, ICE is supposed to coordinate with the Department of Human and Health Services (HHS) Division of Immigration Health Services (DIHS) or State and local social service entities if DIHS is unavailable.¹ These guidelines have been in place at ICE since 2007. However more than 24 hours after the operation had concluded, ICE had still not contacted Mississippi's Department of Child Protection Services.² This left state agencies, schools, and local communities scrambling to help children affected by these raids and ensure they did not go home to an empty house on their first day of school. This is unacceptable.

At a time when this country is grieving due to two domestic terrorist shootings, your agency has instead seemingly deliberately disregarded its own long-standing guidelines and carried out another form of family separation. The blatant lack of planning and resulting chaos calls into question the true motivation behind these worksite enforcement operations. In the interest of understanding the scope of planning behind this operation, please provide the following information in writing no later than August 23, 2019:

¹ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, "Guidelines for Identifying Humanitarian Concerns among Administrative Arrestees When Conducting Worksite Enforcement Operations," available at: <https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ice-hum-guidelines.pdf>.

² Sarah Fowler, "'We've been up all night.' Child Protection Services couldn't locate children," Clarion Ledger, 8 August, 2019. Available at: <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/politics/2019/08/08/ice-raids-children-mississippi-where-are-they-foster-care-schools-churches/1953112001/>.

- What coordination was done with HHS' DIHS before Wednesday's operation? How many DIHS employees were available at ICE processing sites to conduct humanitarian screenings of arrested individuals? Please provide a breakdown by site.
- If DIHS was unable to support this operation, ICE's Guidelines for Identifying Humanitarian Concerns among Administrative Arrestees When Conducting Worksite Enforcement Operations directs ICE to contact, to the extent practicable, a cabinet level official at state or local social service agencies (SSSA) in advance of an operation to coordinate a response. Which, if any, SSSAs and school districts were notified in advance of Wednesday's operations and when?
- If no coordination efforts were made with appropriately trained humanitarian personnel, what training, if any, did ICE agents and officers receive in preparation for this operation?
- In accordance with ICE Policy Number 11064.2 "Detention and Removal of Alien Parents and Legal Guardians", what steps did ICE personnel take to ensure that a parent or legal guardian could make alternative care arrangements for his or her child(ren) in the event that they were not released from ICE's custody? How many adults with children remain in ICE custody?
- Please provide the number of children impacted and the number of children left without a caregiver due to this operation.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman