



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

October 13, 2020

Distinguished United States Senators
(see enclosed list)
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Requesting Senators:

Thank you for your September 18, 2020 letter requesting an investigation into allegations regarding the treatment of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees at the Irwin County Detention Center (ICDC) in Ocilla, Georgia.

The Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General takes these allegations seriously and we initiated an investigation and an evaluation of the Irwin County Detention Center. The objective of our evaluation is to determine whether ICDC provided adequate medical care and COVID-19 protection and properly responded to complaints about facility operations. With appropriate assistance from doctors and nurses under contract with our office, we will evaluate the adequacy of medical care and COVID-19 response at this facility.

In addition to our evaluation of the ICDC, despite limitations on travel because of the pandemic, we continue to conduct virtual, unannounced inspections of ICE detention facilities. We also have several other ongoing reviews that are relevant to the issues raised in the complaint:

- *ICE's Oversight and the Use of Segregation in ICE Detention Facilities* – Our objective is to determine whether ICE's use of administrative and disciplinary segregation across all authorized detention facilities complies with Departmental detention standards.
- *ICE's Efforts to Prevent and Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19 in its Facilities* – Our objective is to determine whether ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations effectively controlled COVID-19 within its detention facilities and adequately safeguarded the health and safety of both detainees in its custody and its staff.



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- *Medical Vacancies at ICE Detention Facilities* – Our objective is to assess the causes and impact of medical vacancies at ICE detention facilities and determine whether existing medical staffing plans and vacancies at detention facilities hinder ICE detainees' access to adequate medical care.

We look forward to reporting the results of this work to you and your colleagues when it is final.

Please call me with questions, or a member of your staff may contact Erica Paulson, Assistant Inspector General, Office of External Affairs, at (202) 981-6000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Joseph V. Cuffari", is positioned above the printed name.

Joseph V. Cuffari, Ph.D.
Inspector General



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Letter to the Requesting U.S. Senators:

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
The Honorable Cory A. Booker
The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
The Honorable Maize K. Hirono
The Honorable Michael F. Bennet
The Honorable Margaret Wood Hassan
The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
The Honorable Tom Udall
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
The Honorable Angus S. King, Jr.
The Honorable Tina Smith
The Honorable Tim Kaine
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
The Honorable Edward J. Markey
The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
The Honorable Sherrod Brown
The Honorable Bernard Sanders
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Mark R. Warner
The Honorable Christopher A. Coons
The Honorable Jack Reed
The Honorable Robert Menendez
The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
The Honorable Martin Heinrich
The Honorable Christopher S. Murphy
The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Maria Cantwell
The Honorable Jacky Rosen
The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
The Honorable Jeffrey A. Merkley
The Honorable Gary C. Peters
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow