

WILLIAM R. KEATING  
9TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

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June 2, 2025

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

Mr. Todd Lyons  
Acting Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20536

The Honorable Pamela Bondi  
Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20535

The Honorable Kash Patel  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Secretary Noem, Attorney General Bondi, Director Patel, and Acting Director Lyons:

I write with deep concerns regarding immigration enforcement actions that have taken place during the week of May 26, 2025, in my district on the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, as well as in the Town of Plymouth. These actions – undertaken by agents of ICE, the FBI, and other federal agencies, many of them masked and in unmarked vehicles – have left these communities scared, confused, and fearful for their own safety, regardless of immigration status. In just one example, the Martha's Vineyard "Brazil Fest," slated for June 1<sup>st</sup>, was cancelled because of "the present climate of fear and intimidation against the immigrant and Brazilian community."<sup>1</sup> These feelings have been shared by many of my constituents who have contacted my office since these actions took place.

Per public reporting,<sup>2</sup> at least 20 people were detained on Martha's Vineyard and 12 from Nantucket while ICE reported in a press release that "around 40" people were detained between

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<sup>1</sup> Genter, E. (2025) Brazil Fest postponed, The Vineyard Gazette - Martha's Vineyard News. Available at: <https://vineyardgazette.com/news/2025/05/28/brazil-fest-postponed>. (Accessed: 30 May 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Seonwoo, E. et al. (2025) ICE agents detain 20 people on Vineyard during islands sweep, The Martha's Vineyard Times. Available at: <https://www.mvtimes.com/2025/05/27/ice-agents-make-arrests-vineyard/> (Accessed: 30 May 2025).

the two islands.<sup>3</sup> Concerned constituents who observed these enforcement actions have contacted my office corroborating news reports that these actions were not narrowly targeted but rather focused on pulling over commercial vehicles. How these specific vehicles were profiled to be pulled over remains an open question that must be answered. In addition, one of the federal agents involved on Martha's Vineyard is alleged to have displayed a "valknot" tattoo, a symbol co-opted by the white supremacist movement, during a detention.<sup>4</sup>

ICE's statement noted that the "apprehensions" on the islands included "a documented gang member and at least one child sex offender"<sup>5</sup> but provided no further information on the remaining detainees, and only an estimate of how many were detained. Further, based on reports from the Town of Plymouth,<sup>6</sup> the Tisbury Police Department,<sup>7</sup> and the Oak Bluffs Police Department,<sup>8</sup> neither ICE nor any other federal agency involved followed the past custom of providing a courtesy notification of their presence to local law enforcement. On April 17, 2025, I raised this very issue in a letter to Secretary Noem, Acting Director Lyon, and Director Patel after Mayor Jon Mitchell reported a lack of notification to local police ahead of the violent apprehension of Juan Francisco Mendez in New Bedford, Massachusetts.<sup>9</sup> I have not received a response to that letter, but it should be noted that Mr. Mendez, who had no criminal record, was ordered to be released after four weeks of detention, as the Department of Homeland Security failed to prosecute a case against him. This lack of notification creates great personal risk for all parties involved in these enforcement activities, including detainees, federal agents, local police, and the community at large. The lack of transparency – the failure to notify local law enforcement, the failure to release any concrete information about the detentions, the decision to use unmarked vehicles, plain clothed officers, and masks – is making our communities less safe.

As a former District Attorney, I intimately understand how staffing disruptions can deeply undermine the speedy and successful closure of ongoing criminal investigations. As mentioned above, numerous reports from my district and across the nation detail ICE actions involving other federal agents wearing identifying uniforms from FBI, ATF, or DEA, among others. I am profoundly concerned that the crucial work of these agencies - work explicitly assigned by Congress - is being jeopardized by the reassignment of their agents to conduct fishing-expedition

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<sup>3</sup> ICE, *federal partners conduct immigration enforcement operations on Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard* (2025) ICE. Available at: <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-federal-partners-conduct-immigration-enforcement-operations-nantucket-marthas> (Accessed: 30 May 2025).

<sup>4</sup> Seonwoo, E. (2025) *Federal agent's Tattoo Stokes Fear*, *The Martha's Vineyard Times*. Available at: <https://www.mvtimes.com/2025/05/30/federal-agents-tattoo-stokes-fear/> (Accessed: 30 May 2025).

<sup>5</sup> ICE, *federal partners conduct immigration enforcement operations on Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard*

<sup>6</sup> *Ice conducts immigration operation in North Plymouth* (2025) *Town of Plymouth, MA*. Available at: <https://www.plymouth-ma.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=330> (Accessed: 30 May 2025).

<sup>7</sup> Genter, E. (2025) *Brazil Fest postponed*, *The Vineyard Gazette - Martha's Vineyard News*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Casey, M. and Ngowi, R. (2025) *Family says ice agents smashed car window in seizing Guatemalan man who's seeking asylum*, *AP News*. Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/ice-detention-francisco-mendez-new-bedford-5c5eb62788e58159f3a27915b4416062> (Accessed: 30 May 2025).

traffic stops in Massachusetts. The deployment of these agents for immigration purposes must be disrupting ongoing investigations and diverting them from their core missions.

To better understand the circumstances surrounding the immigration enforcement activities that took place in my district, I ask that you provide answers to the following questions no later than June 6, 2025:

1. What methods did ICE agents and other federal agents present employ to determine which vehicles to pull over during their enforcement actions?
  - a. Was the physical appearance of the occupants considered while determining whether to stop a vehicle?
2. What steps did federal agents take to determine the legal status of the occupants of each vehicle?
3. What protocols are in place to prevent wrongful detentions?
4. How many vehicles were stopped, and how many of those vehicles were released without a detention?
5. What efforts did ICE take, if any, to notify family members of the apprehension of their loved ones?
  - a. What efforts did ICE take, if any, to ensure that the children of detainees would not return home from school to find their parents missing without explanation?
6. Which federal agencies participated in the immigration enforcement activities on Martha's Vineyard during the week of May 26, 2025?
  - a. How many individuals were detained on Martha's Vineyard?
  - b. What were the lodging and transportation costs associated with the Martha's Vineyard enforcement?
7. Which federal agencies participated in the immigration enforcement activities on Nantucket during the week of May 26, 2025?
  - a. How many individuals were detained on Nantucket?
  - b. What were the lodging and transportation costs associated with the Nantucket enforcement?
8. Which federal agencies participated in the immigration enforcement activities in Plymouth during the week of May 26, 2025?
  - a. How many individuals were detained in Plymouth?
9. Was there a specific reason for choosing to engage in enforcement actions on the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard on the day after Memorial Day?
10. Were any individuals detained in these actions the target of a warrant or detainer order?
11. Were any local law enforcement officials notified of these actions as has been reported as prior practice? If not, why was this notification not made?
12. What probable cause was there to detain each of the individuals detained on Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and in Plymouth?

13. Did any of the detainees possess a criminal record that made their presence in the United States a risk to the American people?
14. Does ICE have any policies in place pertaining to tattoos and/or displaying symbols that represent or have been co-opted to represent the white supremacist movement?
15. How many of the detainees possessed a criminal record that made their presence in the United States a risk to the American people? As ICE Boston has already released the names and charges of some detainees, please provide a full list of detainees and any criminal charges.
16. Without disclosing personally identifiable information, provide a list of other federal and state agents - who are not employees of ICE - who participated in the immigration actions taken in my district.
17. Please provide the times and places where these non-ICE agents were trained to conduct immigration enforcement actions.
18. Without disclosing personally identifiable information, please provide documentation of the dates of employment of the ICE officials who participated in the immigration actions.
19. Please provide ICE's policy on vetting new hires to the agency and how long they must be employed and/or the training required before they can conduct immigration enforcement actions.

I look forward to your prompt response to my inquiries.

Sincerely,

  
WILLIAM R. KEATING  
Member of Congress