

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Mullin,

We write to express our concern over the July 16, 2026 shooting of a 21-year-old woman near the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facility in Aurora, Colorado. While we are relieved that her injuries were not life-threatening, we must ensure that personnel operating at federal immigration detention facilities are adequately screened and trained to prevent incidents like this one. According to the Aurora Police Department, GEO Group employees reporting for their shifts that day were unable to enter the facility because of protest activity. Police allege that two protesters verbally confronted GEO employees and photographed their vehicles before walking away. One employee then retrieved a personally owned firearm and fired in their direction, striking one woman in the foot. He has been charged with seven offenses, including attempted second-degree murder.

Immigration enforcement officers and the contractors supporting them have an obligation to protect public safety while exercising restraint and professionalism. Protests outside immigration detention centers are routine occurrences. An agency responsible for operating secure facilities should be equipped to maintain safe access, communicate with employees, coordinate with local law enforcement, and prevent confrontations between the community and facility personnel from escalating. Just as we believe law enforcement should never be targeted with violence, we believe lawful protesters should be protected – not attacked – by federal officials or those contracted by the government.

The incident in Aurora, and the broader pattern of shootings involving Department of Homeland Security (DHS) personnel across the country, undermine public trust and threaten community safety. As members of the Colorado Congressional delegation, we are responsible for defending the constitutional rights of our constituents and protecting our communities and our law enforcement. The events in Aurora raise questions about whether current DHS policies and practices keep communities, protesters, and law enforcement safe. We believe a thorough review of the Department's policies is necessary to ensure that similar incidents do not recur.

Given this urgent need, we request written responses to the following questions by August 14, 2026:

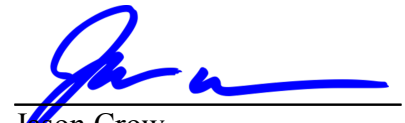
1. What coordination has DHS and ICE undertaken with state and local law enforcement to manage public demonstrations while ensuring employees can safely access their places of work? What will that coordination look like moving forward?
2. What de-escalation, use-of-force, crisis intervention, threats against employees, and crowd-management training is required for DHS personnel and contractor employees assigned to ICE facilities? What training has been provided to the employees at the Aurora facility concerning de-escalation, use-of-force, crisis intervention, threats against employees, and crowd-management training? Which of these trainings did the employee charged in the July 16 shooting complete and on which dates did he complete them?
3. What screening and vetting procedures does DHS require for contractor personnel before they are assigned to ICE facilities? What screening was conducted for the individual charged in the July 16 shooting?
4. What policies and operational plans do DHS and ICE have in place to protect both protesters and employees outside DHS and ICE facilities, including contracted facilities? Does ICE require its detention contractors to designate alternative entrances, transportation arrangements, or other measures for employees during demonstrations or other disruptions to access?
5. GEO Group has placed the employee on unpaid leave and stated that it is cooperating with law enforcement. Beyond the ongoing investigation, what additional steps will DHS and ICE take to determine whether similar vulnerabilities exist at other contracted detention facilities? How will DHS and ICE strengthen oversight of its personnel and contractors and prevent similar incidents from occurring?

In addition to providing the information above, we urge the Department to conduct an independent review of its security procedures, contractor oversight, employee training, and firearms policies, especially as they relate to anticipated confrontations, and to make its findings and recommendations publicly available.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this urgent matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


John Hickenlooper
United States Senator


Jason Crow
Member of Congress


Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress


Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator