

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2018

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Lowey:

As you consider the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Fiscal Year 2019 Appropriations bill, we urge you to reject the proposed increases in funding for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), in particular for immigration detention, ICE agents and the border wall that will enable President Trump to continue building a massive deportation system responsible for the separation of families. The funding bill would enable the Administration to further increase its indiscriminate enforcement of immigration law that is hurting thousands of families, Dreamers, TPS workers and others who have resided in this country for years.

President Trump requested \$46 billion for DHS in his fiscal 2019 budget proposal, and this bill provides more than he requested with \$47.4 billion in discretionary funding for DHS. Instead of adopting proven, cost-effective alternatives to detention, like the Family Case Management Program, this bill increases ICE's detention bed capacity to an all-time high of 44,000 beds, an increase of 3,480 beds from Fiscal year 2018 and 10,000 beds above Fiscal Year 2016. This bill also provides funding for the hiring of an additional 400 ICE law enforcement officers. The Administration claims that these increases will improve national security, but it will, in fact, result in the continued separation and incarceration of families.

We ask that the Committee decrease the number of detention beds in our nation's already overgrown, expensive and inhumane immigration detention system. These detention beds are increasingly being used to detain families, as the number of families apprehended at the border has increased in recent years.^[1] Instead of expanding funds to detain families in DHS facilities which the American Academy of

[1] From October 2017 to June 2018, the number of families apprehended at the border increased from 4,836 to 9,449. U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, *Southwest Border Migration FY2018: U.S. Border Patrol Apprehensions FY2018 YTD (October 1 - June 30)*, updated July 2, 2018, available at <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration>. This follows a longer trend. In 2013, Border Patrol apprehended 15,056 families which grew to 75,802 families apprehended in 2017. See United States Border Patrol, *Total Family Unit Apprehensions By Month*, available at <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2017-Dec/BP%20Total%20Monthly%20Family%20Units%20by%20Sector%2C%20FY13-FY17.pdf>.

Pediatrics has reported, “do not meet the basic standards for the care of children in residential settings”^[2], this Committee should instead re-institute programs like the Family Case Management Program. According to the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General, this program ensured 100% of program participants attended their court hearings and is the safest, most cost-effective option for children and families.^[3]

We urge you to reduce the funding for ICE agents and to reject the increase of 400 ICE law enforcement officers proposed in this bill. As ICE continues to increase the number of arrests of individuals with no criminal conviction, DHS should instead focus its resources on prioritizing actual national security and public safety threats, rather than targeting for removal millions of undocumented immigrants with long-standing ties to communities.^[4] We ask that the Committee stop any further militarization of southern border communities and reduce funding for Border Patrol agents.

Finally, we urge the Committee to provide no funding for the border wall. This bill provides \$5 billion to build an unnecessary and operationally ineffective wall at our southern border. Furthermore, diverting these taxpayer dollars toward the construction of a border wall cripples our investment in responding to other national security threats, which makes us all less safe.

This Administration’s immigration policies have been devastating to families, and we as members of Congress have a responsibility to mitigate this harm by reducing the funding that goes toward further attacks on our country’s immigrants and their families. We urge you to oppose a costly mass deportation agenda that undermines our public safety, economic well-being and values.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your considerable efforts on the FY2019 Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Chair, Congressional Hispanic
Caucus



Judy Chu
Chair, Congressional Asian
Pacific American Caucus



Cedric Richmond
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

^[2] Linton JM, Griffin M, Shapiro AJ, AAP Council On Community Pediatrics. Detention of Immigrant Children. *Pediatrics*. 2017; 139(5) :e20170483, available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2017/03/09/peds.2017-0483>

^[3] Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, *U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Award of the Family Case Management Program Contract (Redacted)*, November 30, 2017. OIG-18-22. <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2017-12/OIG-18-22-Nov17.pdf>.

^[4] From October 2017 to the end of March, nearly 60% of those arrested by ICE had no criminal convictions, a 21% increase from the same period the year before, according to data from ICE obtained by the Huffington Post. Foley, Elise, *Trump’s ICE Is Increasingly Arresting Immigrants Without Criminal Convictions*, Huffington Post, May 17, 2018, available at https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-arresting-noncriminal-immigrants_us_5afdedf4e4b07309e0562f7d.