

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 2014

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Director, Office of Management and Budget
Executive Office of the President
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Burwell,

As you complete the President's Fiscal Year 2015 budget request, we write to urge the end of the requirement that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detain at least 34,000 people per day in detention facilities. This detention bed mandate is an unnecessary burden on the limited financial resources available to ICE.

As you are aware, current law requires that ICE maintain not less than 34,000 detention beds. ICE Director John Morton has testified in front of Congress that the Agency has interpreted this provision to require the maintenance of "a yearly average daily population of approximately 34,000 individuals."

Such a requirement is contrary to the best practices of law enforcement. Indeed, no other law enforcement agencies have quotas on the number of people they must keep in jail. Eliminating the mandate would bring ICE in line with the best practices of law enforcement agencies, which are to use detention beds based on actual need and the potential risks posed by individual detainees.

Moreover, the detention bed mandate is costly. The Department of Homeland Security spends more than \$2 billion per year on immigration detention, or \$5.5 million per day. It costs approximately \$159 per day to detain an individual. Instead, ICE should be considering alternatives detention, including ankle bracelets, curfews, telephonic and in person reporting. Such alternatives cost between \$.70 and \$17 per person, per day.

We therefore urge the Administration to firmly oppose the detention bed mandate in the President's Fiscal Year 2015 budget request and support providing ICE with the tools they need to consider alternatives to detention for eligible detainees.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from your on this issue and to working with you in the near future.

Sincerely,


Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress


Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

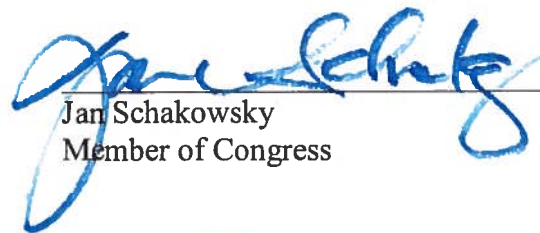

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

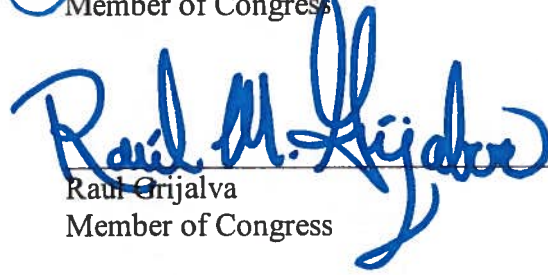

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Member of Congress


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Jared Polis
Member of Congress

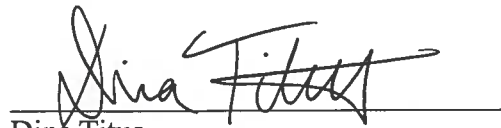

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The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell

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Page 4

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Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Michelle Lujan Grisham in blue ink.

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress