

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2026

The Hon. Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security

The Hon. Todd Lyons
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Secretary Noem and Acting Director Lyons:

We are urgently calling on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS or the Department) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to shut down Camp East Montana in El Paso, Texas.

Camp East Montana has been operational for six months, and at least three people have died at the site since December 2025: Francisco Gaspar-Andres¹, Geraldo Lunas Campos², and Victor Manuel Diaz³. The El Paso County Medical Examiner has officially ruled Lunas Campos' death a homicide, citing "asphyxia due to neck and torso compression⁴."

Camp East Montana was constructed in a matter of weeks and opened before construction was complete and it does not have enough federal staff on-site to provide adequate oversight. Over the last several months, Congresswoman Veronica Escobar, in whose district this facility is located, has sent multiple letters to DHS and ICE regarding concerns about the conditions at Camp East Montana, and has received no responses.⁵

According to detainees, there have been constant and consistent problems at the facility since it opened, beginning with the facility's poor construction and poor ambient temperature control. Upon opening, the drinking water at Camp East Montana tasted foul and made some detainees sick. Detainees continue to be served inadequate meals, including food that is rotten or frozen; last fall, the facility was also consistently failing to make dietary accommodations for detainees. Detainees have shared that they have sporadic access to outside spaces and recreational areas, and that their dormitory pods are cleaned only once every eight days, despite pods housing up to 72 people at a time. Laundry services are not consistent, and people are washing their clothes in the facility showers. Additionally, the facility experiences flooding and sewage backups when it rains, leading to stagnant water.

One of the biggest concerns with the Camp East Montana facility is the inadequate medical care being provided to detainees. Our offices have heard that only the most ill detainees are referred to the medical unit and that there are inconsistencies as to how soon after arriving detainees are able to undergo initial medical screenings.

¹*Illegal alien from Guatemala in ICE custody dies at local hospital from suspected natural causes: liver, kidney failure*, U.S. IMMIGR. AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (Dec. 5, 2025), <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/illegal-alien-guatemala-ice-custody-dies-local-hospital-suspected-natural-causes>.

²*ICE reports aggravated felon and convicted child sex offender's death at Camp East Montana in Texas*, U.S. IMMIGR. AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (Jan. 9, 2026), <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-reports-aggravated-felon-and-convicted-child-sex-offenders-death-camp-east>.

³*ICE reports death of illegal alien in custody in El Paso*, U.S. IMMIGR. AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (Jan. 9, 2026), <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-reports-death-illegal-alien-custody-el-paso>.

⁴Natalie Venegas, *Medical examiner rules migrant's death at Camp East Montana a homicide*, KFOX14 (Jan. 21, 2026), <https://kfoxtv.com/news/local/medical-examiner-rules-migrants-death-at-camp-east-montana-a-homicide>.

⁵In December, Congresswoman Escobar laid these specific concerns out to ICE Director Todd Lyons in person, and though Director Lyons committed to responding, ICE has not yet responded to a single letter.

Detainees with chronic health issues who rely on regimented medications for their health have had difficulty accessing necessary medications, including blood pressure medication and insulin.

At least one of the deaths that occurred in ICE custody, the death of Francisco Gaspar-Andres, appears to partially be the result of poor medical care by staff at the facility. According to ICE's own account, Gaspar-Andres sought medical attention from facility staff for increasingly serious symptoms, but was only transferred to an area hospital once his condition had severely deteriorated.⁶

In addition to our concerns about poor medical care, we are also aware that detainees have experienced irregular access to their legal counsel, including instances of detainees having only two minutes allotted per phone call every 8 days, which is contrary to ICE's Detention Standards on access to counsel, and that the belatedly created law library lacks adequate resources for the amount of people currently held at the facility. In January 2026, ICE announced the on-site death of Geraldo Lunas Campos "after experiencing medical distress." ICE opened an investigation into the death, but did not provide a cause of death. However, *The Washington Post* later reported⁷ that another man detained at Camp East Montana had witnessed guards choking Lunas Campos when he refused to enter a segregated housing unit. Weeks later, the El Paso County Medical Examiner ruled that Lunas Campos had experienced "asphyxia due to neck and torso compression" and ruled his death a homicide.

Lunas Campos is the first detainee to die at Camp East Montana as a result of a use-of-force incident, but we are strongly concerned that he will not be the last if ICE is allowed to continue operating Camp East Montana.

ICE was given \$45 billion taxpayer dollars in the reconciliation bill, \$1.2 billion of which were awarded to Acquisition Logistics, LLC, a company with no previous experience managing immigration detention facilities, to build and oversee Camp East Montana. However, in the wake of three deaths in custody so far, continued concerns about conditions at the facility, and ICE's apparent disinterest in responding to oversight letters from Congress, we do not believe Camp East Montana is being run professionally or responsibly.

Camp East Montana must be shut down. For the safety of everyone at the facility, for an end to abuses to detainees, and for fiscal responsibility to the American people, the site cannot continue to operate. We are calling on DHS and ICE to move to immediately close operations at Camp East Montana.

We look forward to hearing from the Department promptly on this matter.

Sincerely,

⁶ *Illegal alien from Guatemala in ICE custody dies at local hospital from suspected natural causes: liver, kidney failure, supra note 1.*

⁷ Douglas MacMillan, *Medical examiner likely to classify death of ICE detainee as homicide, recorded call says*, WASH. POST (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2026/01/15/ice-detention-death-homicide/>.



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Ranking Member
Immigration Integrity, Security,
and Enforcement
House Judiciary Committee



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



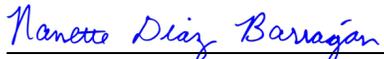
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

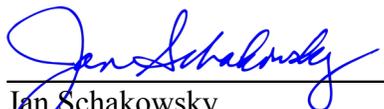


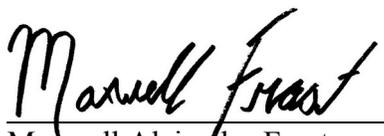
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress


Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress


Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress


Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress


Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress

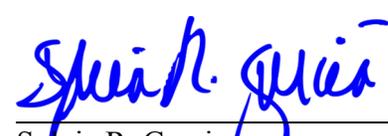

Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress


Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress


Paul Tonko
Member of Congress


Dan Goldman
Member of Congress


Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress


Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress


Darren Soto
Member of Congress