

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 7, 2025

Acting Director Todd Lyons
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Acting Director Lyons:

We write regarding the apparent widespread violations of historical norms and traditions in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's ("ICE") operations in Los Angeles and across the country by engaging in law enforcement activities—including arrests—without wearing identifying uniforms and while masked.

As ICE engages in unprecedented numbers of immigration raids across the country, reportedly in response to arbitrary quotas set by White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller,¹ it is crucial that ICE personnel not engage in conduct that is all but guaranteed to sow chaos and confusion and put law enforcement officers in danger.

Storming courthouses,² grabbing students off the street,³ raiding places of work,⁴ and sweeping through restaurants at prime dining hours⁵ are in and of themselves tactics clearly designed to engender fear and sow chaos in the population. Doing so in plainclothes, with no identification of their name or agency, while wearing a mask designed to obscure the agent's face, represents a clear attempt to compound that fear and chaos – and to avoid accountability for agents' actions.

Federal law expressly requires federal law enforcement personnel to wear identifying uniforms when addressing civil disturbances⁶ in recognition of this clear fact: when federal agents are exercising government authority, including the power to arrest people, the public has the right to know for certain that those agents work for the government and which agency employs them. That is why law enforcement officers historically and traditionally, unless under cover for specific reason, wear identifiable uniforms while on duty.

¹ Sara Dorn, *Stephen Miller Pushes For Even More Surprise ICE Raids—His Deportation Quotas, Explained*, FORBES, Jun. 9, 2025.

² Caroline Wilburn, *ICE agents make arrest at Houston immigration court for 3rd day*, HOUSTON CHRONICLE, June 11, 2025.

³ Emma Tucker, *As Trump's immigration crackdown continues, ethics questions are being raised over the use of masked federal agents*, CNN, Apr. 8, 2025.

⁴ Patrick Smith et al., *As immigration raids continue, ICE protests spread coast to coast*, NBC NEWS, June 10, 2025.

⁵ *San Diego lawmakers demand answers regarding ICE raid at Buona Forchetta*, NBC NEWS SAN DIEGO, June 6, 2025.

⁶ 10 U.S.C. 723(a).

The consequences of allowing unfettered plainclothes enforcement actions are clear. Not only does it frighten people and lead to increased chaos, but it also allows criminals to take advantage of this environment of uncertainty. For example, there have been several reports of armed criminals robbing individuals by posing as plainclothes ICE agents.⁷ In one instance in Greensboro, North Carolina, several people were injured when armed individuals, falsely identifying themselves as ICE agents, pushed their way inside a home and robbed the family inside.

ICE has justified its widespread failure to require their agents to wear identifying uniforms or badges—and to allow them to mask their face while on duty—by claiming that their officers are uniquely at risk of doxxing.⁸

Officers of the Los Angeles Police Department, who engage in law enforcement including arrests and often face less-than-friendly individuals in the course of their duties, are required to wear their uniform while on duty. More fundamentally, even *if* ICE could demonstrate a greater risk, that fear does not justify eroding core principles of transparency and public accountability by operating entirely without uniforms and while masked, without any indication that they are federal law enforcement officers. The public has a right to know which officials are exercising police power, and anonymous enforcement undermines both constitutional norms and democratic oversight.

As United States Senators, we have a constitutional duty to conduct oversight over the Executive Branch to ensure that it complies with the Constitution and with federal law in the execution of its duties. Where federal law is insufficient, we must investigate the need for additional legislation. Just as importantly, we owe a duty to our constituents to ensure that their rights are not being violated by their own government. Therefore, we ask that you respond to the following questions by Monday, July 21, 2025.

1. What are U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's policies with regards to wearing masks while on duty?
2. What are U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's policies with regards to wearing uniforms or other identifiable markers while on duty?

Sincerely,

⁷ Jireh Deng, *Two men impersonated ICE agents to rob Latino residents, Anaheim police say*, LOS ANGELES TIMES, June 24, 2024; Celeste Smith & Dolan Reynolds, *Robbery suspects posed as ICE agents, North Carolina family says*, WGHP, Jan. 23, 2025; Jack Tomczuk, *Fake ICE agents exploiting fear, DA says after Mayfair robbery*, METRO PHILADELPHIA, June 24, 2025.

⁸ Ted Hesson et al., *Los Angeles ICE raids fuel controversy over masked agents*, REUTERS, June 9, 2025.



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



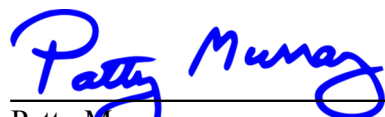
Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator




Ron Wyden
United States Senator



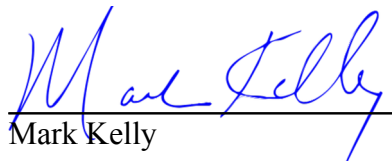
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator