Office of the Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senate Minority Leader:

We write to express our deep concern for the protection of human rights in our nation's immigration system, specifically those detained in the more than 200 detention facilities across the country.

The United States operates the largest immigration detention system in the world, with an average of 67,456 people in detention daily. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention system has operated with a consistent lack of transparency across administrations. Incidents of violence, failures in medical treatment, and abusive conditions of confinement are often underreported.

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), detainees in ICE custody have been beaten by guards, denied necessary medical care, and prevented from contacting family members or lawyers. In some cases, these practices amounted to enforced disappearance under international human rights law.

This is unacceptable and we urge Congress to:

- Eliminate mandatory immigration detention;
- Pass binding detention standards that ensure constitutional treatment of detained people; and
- Immediately conduct robust oversight of ICE detention, including through use of subpoena authority and investigations into the conditions reported by organizations like HRW and the ACLU, including investigating deaths in ICE custody, healthcare services, and the use of solitary confinement.

The impact of these abuses extend beyond those held in detention and affect communities across the country. For us, this issue is deeply personal, as friends, family members, classmates and neighbors have been caught up in this cruel U.S. immigration system.

It is time to create a better, humane, and human rights-respecting immigration process. For decades we have relied too much on punitive and carceral approaches that add to the harms already experienced by families and children seeking safety within our borders. We are better than this. We ask you to take a leadership role to protect human rights in our nation's immigration system, and to be a voice for human dignity.

Sincerely,

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