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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT
COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE (U.S.
HELSINKI COMMISSION)

October 20, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General of the United States
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20530

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Secretary Noem:

I write to express serious concern about the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) recruitment advertisements currently airing on television across the country, including in Memphis, and to urge that they be discontinued immediately. These advertisements demean the work of local law enforcement officers and actively encourage them to leave their departments for ICE—undermining morale, straining local agencies, and ultimately degrading public safety.

These commercials make our communities less safe. They demoralize local officers and lure them away from their departments at a time when many police forces are already facing severe staffing shortages. In Memphis, for example, recruiting qualified candidates has been one of the City's top priorities, yet the Memphis Police Department (MPD) remains roughly 500 officers—about 20 percent—below full strength.

ICE's enormous incentives, including advertised signing bonuses as high as \$50,000 and student loan forgiveness, only exacerbate the problem. To put that in perspective, an MPD patrol officer earns approximately \$55,000 per year. A bonus of that size is effectively a full year's salary—an understandably tempting offer for officers who have dedicated their careers to serving their communities. Every officer who leaves for ICE is one fewer officer on the beat, worsening an

already critical staffing shortage. Those who remain face longer hours, more mandatory overtime, and greater risk—all while feeling that their work is devalued by the federal government.

The scale of ICE's recruitment campaign and its large financial incentives imply that immigration enforcement is a greater national priority than local policing. Local law enforcement officers work diligently—and often in dangerous circumstances—to keep our communities safe. There is no substitute for a professional, well-trained police department. When you call 911 in an emergency, local police respond, not ICE. They are our first responders, and their role cannot be replaced.

The advertisements also misrepresent the work of local police. They suggest that officers are ordered to “stand down” and allow dangerous individuals to go free. That is simply false. In Memphis—as in every jurisdiction across the country—police arrest violent offenders regardless of immigration status. To imply otherwise is not only inaccurate but deeply insulting to the men and women who risk their lives daily to keep their communities safe. It is also worth noting that statistically, immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, are less likely to engage in criminal activity than U.S. citizens.

Congress has repeatedly acted on a bipartisan basis to strengthen and support local law enforcement. We fund them directly through federal grants, provide training and technical assistance, and maintain federal agencies—such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives—that work in close partnership with state and local departments. The Department of Justice itself houses entire components devoted to supporting and improving local policing.

For the safety of all our communities, federal agencies must not pit themselves against local law enforcement. This approach is shortsighted, divisive, and dangerous. I urge you to remove these advertisements and to reconsider ICE's recruitment strategy so that it strengthens—rather than undermines—the vital work of our local police.

Sincerely,



Steve Cohen

MEMBER OF CONGRESS

