



One Hundred Nineteenth Congress  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2025

The Hon. Mark Green  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H2-176 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Green:

This letter serves to formalize the demand made yesterday by multiple Committee Democrats that you, prior to your upcoming departure from Congress, summon the Secretary of Homeland Security to testify about the egregious treatment of Senator Alex Padilla during a Department of Homeland Security (DHS or the Department) press conference at a Federal building in Los Angeles, California.<sup>1</sup> This marks the second occasion that law enforcement entities within the Department have used force to obstruct congressional oversight,<sup>2</sup> and one in a series of instances in which the Department has refused to comply with oversight requests.<sup>3</sup> The Department's actions are an affront not only to congressional prerogatives afforded by the Constitution but also to rule of law and democracy itself. The Committee must not stand by idly.

As you are likely aware, Secretary Kristi Noem has an abysmal record of responding to inquiries and document requests from Capitol Hill. On Thursday afternoon, Senator Padilla attempted to participate in an event at a Federal building in order to engage the Secretary on the aggressive and unlawful tactics the Trump administration has used against residents of California in recent weeks. In addition to sweeping, indiscriminate Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

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<sup>1</sup> Nnamdi Egwuonwu, *Sen. Alex Padilla Disputes Trump Administration's Account of His Forcible Removal at a DHS Event*, MSNBC (Jun. 12, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/sen-alex-padilla-disputes-trump-administrations-account-incident-led-f-rcna212760>.

<sup>2</sup> See Steve Strunsky, *Feds Are Lying About Members of Congress Storming ICE Center; Congresswoman Says*, NJ.COM (May 12, 2025), <https://www.nj.com/essex/2025/05/feds-are-lying-about-members-of-congress-storming-ice-center-congresswoman-says.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Eduardo Cuevas, *ICE Denies Access of Crowded Detention Facilities, Lawmakers Say*, USA TODAY (Jun. 11, 2025), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/06/11/ice-denies-migrant-detention-oversight/84140938007/>.

raids targeting non-criminal migrants,<sup>4</sup> the administration deployed National Guard troops to Los Angeles—against the will of California’s Governor—to silence protestors.<sup>5</sup>

Understandably, the people of California are outraged. Senator Padilla was doing his job when he attempted to communicate their outrage to Secretary Noem and ask questions about the administration’s brazen actions in the State. Unfortunately, despite being brought into the briefing room by law enforcement, being identified by law enforcement in the room, and clearly identifying himself, Senator Padilla was shoved out of the room, tackled to the ground, and ultimately handcuffed.<sup>6</sup> It was a mortifying display for the Department and for the country. Secretary Noem was present and aware of what was happening and at no point attempted to intervene. She later gave the excuse that no one in the room recognized the Senator, which we know is not true.

If it was true that neither the Secretary nor anyone who works for her was able to identify one of the two Senators of a State in which her Department is executing widespread immigration raids, she should take responsibility and apologize for the fact their ignorance resulted in the Senator being treated as a criminal. Instead, the Secretary has been slandering the Senator, falsely suggesting that he never identified himself and that he lunged at her. Video footage of the incident demonstrates both accusations to be patently false.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the Trump administration continues to parrot these lies to malign Senator Padilla and distract the public from the authoritarian tactics the President is using to attempt to silence dissent. It is frighteningly consistent with how the Trump administration treats all of those it views as political opponents.

In addition to suggesting she did not know Senator Padilla, Secretary Noem also punted questions on how the Senator was assaulted to law enforcement.<sup>8</sup> At least some of the law enforcement agencies to which she refers, however, are housed within her agency, and the buck is supposed to stop with Secretary Noem. She has an obligation to understand, own, and correct the mistreatment of Senator Padilla.

It is important to note that the issue we need to raise with Secretary Noem goes beyond the treatment of one Senator. What happened to Senator Padilla was completely unacceptable, and it is part of the Trump administration’s assault on American democracy. If this is how the administration treats a United States Senator in full public view, imagine what it would do to Americans behind closed doors.

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<sup>4</sup> See Maanvi Singh, *Families Arrested in LA ICE Raids Held in Basements with Little Food or Water, Lawyers Say*, THE GUARDIAN (Jun. 11, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/11/la-ice-raids-immigration-conditions>.

<sup>5</sup> See Andrew Gumbel, *Troops and Marines Deeply Troubled by LA Deployment: ‘Morale Is Not Great,’* THE GUARDIAN (Jun. 12, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/12/los-angeles-national-guard-troops-marines-morale>.

<sup>6</sup> Shawn Hubler, et al., *California Senator Forcible Removed and Handcuffed After Interrupting Noem*, N.Y. TIMES (Jun. 12, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/12/us/politics/senator-alex-padilla-handcuffed.html>.

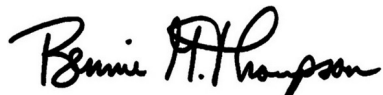
<sup>7</sup> *Id.*


<sup>8</sup> Nik Popli, *Democratic Senator Slammed to the Ground and Handcuffed at Kristi Noem Event in LA*, TIME (Jun. 12, 2025), <https://time.com/7293667/alex-padilla-noem-los-angeles/>.


Unfortunately, the Secretary is, at best, complicit in President Trump's efforts to dismantle our democracy and replace it with an authoritarian-style government. In less than 6 months, Secretary Noem has defied multiple court orders,<sup>9</sup> deported American children,<sup>10</sup> dismantled the Department's efforts to combat foreign interference in U.S. elections,<sup>11</sup> and doubled down on administration efforts to cast political opponents as villains. This kind of lawless behavior, coupled with reckless disregard for democratic institutions, are the hallmarks of anti-democratic regimes. Secretary Noem must answer to the Committee for the actions she has taken and overseen.


Although your time in Congress has been brief, I am sure you have come to appreciate the importance of oversight, particularly during the 4 ½ years you have served on the Committee. Indeed, you summoned the previous Homeland Security Secretary, who notably never witnessed and condoned the assault of a sitting Senator, to testify multiple times, only to impeach him. We appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

  
BENNIE G. THOMPSON  
Ranking Member

  
Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

  
J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress

  
Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress

  
Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress

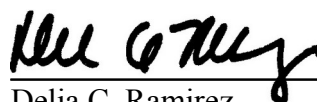
<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Katelyn Polantz, *Kilmar Abrego Garcia's Lawyers Ask Judge to Sanction Trump Administration*, CNN (Jun. 12, 2025), Kelly Garrity, et al., *Trump Admin Flight to South Sudan Violated Court Order; Judge Rules*, CNN (May 21, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/05/21/trump-deportations-south-sudan-00362919>.

<sup>10</sup> Madeline Halpert, *Three US Children, One With Cancer, Deported to Honduras, Lawyers Say*, BBC (Apr. 28, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g8yj2n33yo>.

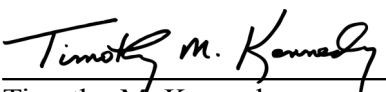
<sup>11</sup> See Lawrence Norden & Natasha Hill, *How the Federal Government is Undermining Election Security*, Brennan Center (Apr. 14, 2025), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/how-federal-government-undermining-election-security>.



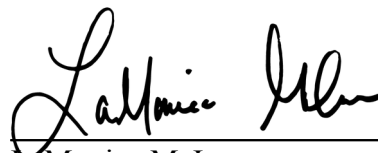
Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson  
Member of Congress



Pablo José Hernández  
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Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
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