



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Democratic Field Hearing on the ICE Shooting of Wilber Garcés-Pérez and Shootings by Federal Immigration Agents Across Texas

October 15, 2026

We are here today to demand justice and accountability in ICE's shooting of Wilber, a 28-year-old father from Venezuela, as well as for others – like Ruben Ray Martinez and Lorenzo Salgado Araujo – who were shot by immigration agents in Texas.

Wilber entered the U.S. legally by making an appointment with a Federal government-run program at a port of entry. He has been seeking asylum to escape political repression and provide for his son in Venezuela who has special needs.

Wilber was driving for DoorDash to provide for his family when he was pulled over and shot in the back by an ICE officer. He was taken to a hospital but was discharged a short while later with a bullet still lodged near his spine. He was taken to an ICE detention center over 100 miles away.

Wilber was not provided with the medical treatment he needed. He sat in detention for almost two weeks before he finally had surgery to remove the bullet. I cannot imagine any doctor recommended waiting two weeks to remove the bullet.

This should not be how people are treated in America.

Unfortunately, what happened to Wilber is not new. Since the beginning of Trump's violent mass deportation campaign, there have been three known incidents in Texas where ICE officers shot immigrants and citizens alike.

On March 15, 2025, ICE agents shot and killed Ruben Ray Martinez, a 23-year-old Texan and American citizen. Ruben's death is the first known incident where ICE agents killed an American citizen during Trump's deportation campaign.

His family was not told until nearly a year later that it was ICE that shot and killed him. President Trump's Department of Homeland Security clearly tried to cover up the shooting. Mr. Martinez's family and the public only found out what happened after Federal officials were forced to disclose that information through a separate lawsuit. There are still many unanswered questions about Mr. Martinez's death, and his family deserves answers and accountability.

On July 7, 2026, ICE agents shot and killed Lorenzo Salgado Araujo while he was on his way to work in Houston. DHS claimed Lorenzo weaponized his vehicle against ICE agents, but three of his co-workers who were in the van testified that it was ICE that rammed into Lorenzo's vehicle before shooting him. Notably, DHS tried to get the co-workers deported before a credible investigation could be completed. To further discredit Lorenzo, the FBI issued a search warrant for a powdery substance in his van. They found no drugs — the substance was packets of electrolyte powder.

Tragically, these aren't isolated cases. Across the country, immigration officers have hurt and killed Americans and immigrants alike, created chaos in our communities, and violated the law.

Instead of going after the "worst of the worst" like they promised, ICE is targeting people with no criminal records to fulfill arbitrary, politically motivated quotas. In the Texas cases, none of the men shot by ICE had criminal records. Targeting people like them does not make us safer.

ICE has also lowered its hiring standards and cut its training time in half, placing unqualified and poorly trained officers on our streets, including right here in Texas.

DHS has lied repeatedly about what happened in these shootings, falsely blaming the victims and then backtracking when video footage contradicts their lies.

The ICE officer who shot Wilber was a new recruit and was not wearing a body camera – even though he was issued one. His fellow officer had a body camera on but actively turned off his camera during the pursuit. Now I have to ask – why would the officer turn off his camera? What did he have to hide? We know that not wearing an issued body-worn camera was against policy. We know that turning the camera off was against policy. In fact, immigration officers are specifically required to have their body worn cameras on during a pursuit.

This is why I will be introducing legislation to require all DHS agencies deploy and use body cameras, establish uniform operating rules, and increase transparency and congressional oversight. The bill, titled the "DHS Body-Worn and Dashboard Camera Accountability Act" will mandate that all ICE officers wear and turn on body cameras during arrests, patrol activities, vehicle stops, uses of force, deportation orders, and other activities.

DHS and the Justice Department are now claiming that Wilber was an aggressor without providing actual evidence. They are also refusing to provide any requested information or evidence to local police investigators.

Amidst the chaos, congressional Republicans have turned a blind eye. Republicans gave ICE over \$110 billion in taxpayer funding with no strings attached and skipped town early to campaign for the midterms.

Homeland Security Committee Democrats have held forums and conducted site visits in communities devastated by ICE's immigration policies. We have heard from elected leaders, community members, and grieving families from Maine, Houston, New Orleans, New Jersey, Chicago, Minneapolis, and beyond.

And now, tragically, we add Austin to the list of communities that have suffered a terrible loss. Today, we will hear testimony from attorneys and advocacy groups about the shootings that have been happening in Texas. We will also hear directly from the mother of Ruben Ray Martinez, a Texan and U.S. citizen killed by ICE.

Please know that we will do everything possible to hold this Administration accountable for what happened in Austin and ensure the Federal government cooperates fully with local, independent investigations. This violence, lawlessness, and chaos must end. We will not look away, we will not stop, and we will not allow these abuses to go unchallenged.

#

[Media contact](#)