

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

September 21, 2020

Mr. Tony H. Pham
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20536-5003

Mr. Rodney Cooper
Executive Director
LaSalle Corrections
26228 Ranch Road 12
Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Mr. Phil Bickham
Warden
Irwin County Detention Center
132 Cotton Drive
Ocilla, GA 31774

Dear Mr. Pham, Mr. Cooper, and Mr. Bickham:

The Committees are investigating allegations raised by Ms. Dawn Wooten, a licensed practical nurse at the Irwin County Detention Center (ICDC), and ICDC detainees in a September 14, 2020, whistleblower complaint.¹ Among other allegations, she has alleged that women who were detained at the ICDC were sent to an outside medical provider to undergo gynecological procedures—including but not limited to hysterectomies—without providing informed consent. She has also alleged that there was repeated disregard for the safety of both employees and detainees in contravention of protocols recommended by federal authorities to control the spread of coronavirus. These allegations, if true, are a shock to the conscience.

To assist the Committees' investigation of these allegations, the Committees request that you provide by October 2, 2020, all documents responsive to the following requests:

¹ Project South, Lack of Medical Care, Unsafe Work Practices, and Absence of Adequate Protection Against COVID-19 for Detained Immigrants and Employees Alike at the Irwin County Detention Center (Sept. 14, 2020) (online at <https://projectsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/OIG-ICDC-Complaint-1.pdf>).

1. Documents sufficient to show, from January 1, 2015, to the present the number of individuals who were detained at ICDC for any length of time and provided any type of gynecological or obstetrical care, whether at the facility or at any off-site location, by any provider, including the nature of care provided, any surgical procedures performed, and records referring or relating to billing for or payment in any form for such care;
2. All documents from January 1, 2015, to the present referring or relating to complaints of any kind in any form made by any individual—including but not limited to any individual who worked at or was detained at ICDC for any length of time or any third-party—regarding the provision or denial of any form of medical care whether by personnel located at the facility or personnel in any off-site location, including but not limited to gynecological or obstetrical care and care pertaining to coronavirus;
3. All communications between ICDC staff and any medical service provider—including but not limited to any physician or medical practice—that provided any type of gynecological or obstetrical care from January 1, 2015 to the present to any individual who was detained at ICDC for any length of time;
4. All documents from January 1, 2015, to the present referring or relating to any type of contractual or legal relationship between LaSalle, ICDC, or any related or subsidiary business enterprise with any medical service provider—including but not limited to any physician or medical practice—that provided any type of gynecological or obstetrical care from January 1, 2015 to the present to any individual who was detained at ICDC for any length of time;
5. All documents referring or relating to the implementation of any protocols and/or policies at ICDC at any time period from January 1, 2020, to the present to prevent the spread of coronavirus among and between detainees and employees;
6. All documents from January 1, 2020, to the present referring or relating to any medical treatment of any kind provided to any individual detained at ICDC for any length of time for known or suspected infection with coronavirus, whether at the facility or at any off-site location, including but not limited to referrals for care, and records referring or relating to billing for or payment in any form for such care; and
7. All documents from January 1, 2015, to the present referring or relating to the management in any manner of any medical records pertaining to any individual detained at ICDC for any length of time, including but not limited to any document referring or relating to the shredding or disposal in any other manner of any form of medical record.

The Committee on Homeland Security has jurisdiction under House Rule X over homeland security policy and the organization, administration, and general management of the

Department of Homeland Security. The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X.

An attachment to this letter provides additional instructions for responding to the Committees’ document request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee on Homeland Security staff at (202) 226-2616 or Oversight Committee staff at (202) 225-5051. The Committees appreciate your immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



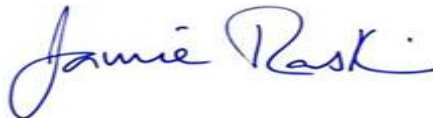
BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security



CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform



KATHLEEN RICE
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Border Security,
Facilitation, and Operations



JAMIE RASKIN
Chairman
Subcommittee on Civil Rights
and Civil Liberties

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Mike Rogers, Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Clay Higgins, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Border Security, Facilitation, and Operations

The Honorable Chip Roy, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties