

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 17, 2026

The Honorable Joseph V. Cuffari
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Inspector General Cuffari:

On September 8, 2026, a protected whistleblower made the attached disclosure to the Senate (the “Disclosure”) that reveals serious allegations of illegal and inappropriate activities within the Department of Homeland Security’s (“DHS” or “the Department”) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”) Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate (“FDNS”).

The attached Disclosure confirms that the Department and USCIS leadership have abruptly diverted FDNS from its mission and directed personnel to an “Unlawful Voter Initiative” using highly questionable data and methods to identify purported unlawful voters. DHS and USCIS training materials admit these investigations will include U.S. citizens, some of whom will have federal law enforcement records created about them based on unreliable data and rushed reviews by officers held to quotas. This initiative is placing FDNS employees in an impossible position. They are being directed to take actions in the weeks before the election that this whistleblower believes are against the law and Department policy, and which will harm Americans.

The whistleblower’s Disclosure includes compelling evidence of wrongdoing by agency leadership including:

- (1) USCIS personnel have been directed to access sensitive voter information in violation of state laws prohibiting unauthorized access to individual voter records, including to make false certifications and affirmations;¹
- (2) USCIS personnel are under significant pressure from headquarters to enter federal TECS² records about individuals that have a high risk of being false, potentially harming thousands of people in likely violation of federal privacy requirements;³
- (3) Agency leadership is imposing reckless quotas that demand USCIS personnel investigate 40 subjects per day with minimal training, a rate of roughly 12 minutes per subject, with leadership tracking agent output in an attempt to complete this rushed investigation by September 12;⁴ and

¹ Disclosure Letter to Senator Padilla from Anonymous Whistleblower re: Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Direction to Identify “Unlawful Voters”, (Sept. 8, 2026), 1.

² “TECS” is a system where “users are able to input, access, or maintain law enforcement, inspection, intelligence-gathering, and operational records.” See DHS/CBP/PIA-021 TECS System: Platform, available at: <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/dhscbppia-021-tecs-system-platform>

³ Disclosure Letter, 1.

⁴ *Id.* at 2.

(4) DHS is providing USCIS personnel with DHS data of dubious origin, including voter data, which they are required to accept as accurate despite the admission that the data has been augmented with “supplemental magic.”⁵

The whistleblower’s Disclosure states that rank-and-file USCIS employees have serious concerns with the actions they have been directed to perform as part of the “Unlawful Voter Initiative.” When the whistleblower and others raised concerns about potential violations of state law, they were advised that they would not be held “personally liable”, implying an awareness of potential illegality by agency leadership. All these claims require a thorough and objective investigation, including whether authority exists to collect and use all relevant data, free of interference by agency leadership.

This initiative plainly appears to be a political exercise that poses risks to national security. Over the past several weeks, CNN, The New York Times, The Washington Post, ProPublica, and other outlets have reported on the intense White House pressure on DHS and other agencies to back up the President’s baseless claims of widespread election fraud.⁶ According to these reports, former USCIS officials are concerned that “work screening immigration applications for false information and possible security threats has effectively ground to a halt.”⁷

Concerningly, the launch of the “Unlawful Voter Initiative” also occurred immediately following an FDNS reorganization that may have made these highly questionable practices easier to implement quickly across the agency. Your investigation should also examine whether this reorganization contributed to the management failures involved in this initiative.

The DHS Office of Inspector General’s (OIG) mission is “to provide independent oversight and promote excellence, integrity, and accountability within DHS.” We urge you to carry out that mission by immediately opening an independent investigation into the alleged wrongdoings detailed in the whistleblower’s claims, which describe agency leadership directing officers to violate the law and DHS standards of integrity. Failure to do so risks compounding the serious concerns about these activities within the FDNS workforce and the lack of integrity of FDNS, USCIS, and DHS leadership. In addition to your investigation, please use every tool at your disposal, including a management alert, to address this immediately and prevent any additional wrongdoing or misuse of agency personnel and resources while the investigation is ongoing.

Given the time-sensitive nature of these claims, and the potential for misuse of this information for political purposes in the upcoming 2026 midterm elections, please provide weekly updates on the status of your investigation to the leadership of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, and Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Finally, recognizing the special provisions concerning the DHS

⁵ *Id.* at 3.

⁶ Peter Elkind, et. al., *Inside Trump’s Failed Hunt for Noncitizen Voters*, ProPublica (Aug. 14, 2026), <https://www.propublica.org/article/noncitizen-voting-trump-homeland-security-investigations>; Alvarez, et. al., *Exclusive: DHS plans to launch voter fraud investigation surge Tuesday*, CNN (Aug. 31, 2026), <https://www.cnn.com/2026/08/31/politics/homeland-security-voter-fraud-investigations>; Nick Corasaniti & Hamed Aleaziz, *Trump Administration Begins Blitz to Find Elusive Voter Fraud Ahead of Midterms*, New York Times (Sept. 2, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/02/us/politics/trump-election-voter-fraud.html>; Ted Hesson, *Immigration Officers Are Being Diverted to Trump’s Voter Fraud Effort*, Washington Post (Aug. 25, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2026/08/25/immigration-officers-are-being-diverted-trumps-voter-fraud-effort/>.

⁷ Ted Hesson, *Immigration Officers Are Being Diverted to Trump’s Voter Fraud Effort*, Washington Post (Aug. 25, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2026/08/25/immigration-officers-are-being-diverted-trumps-voter-fraud-effort/>.

Secretary's authority over certain DHS OIG audits and investigations, if the Secretary refuses to cooperate with an audit or investigation, please notify us immediately.⁸

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



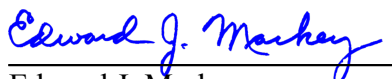
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



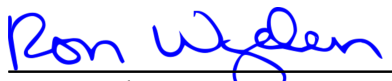
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator

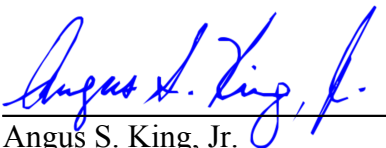


Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

⁸ See 5 U.S.C. § 417(a)(3) (providing requirements of mandatory IG notifications to Congress).



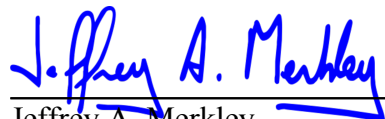
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator

Enclosures:

Senator Padilla and Senator Schumer Letter to DHS Secretary Mullin and USCIS Director Edlow (Sept. 13, 2026)

Whistleblower Disclosure Letter to Senator Padilla (Sept. 8, 2026)

cc: Chairman Mitch McConnell, Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
Chairman Rand Paul, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
Chairman Chuck Grassley, Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Ranking Member Gary Peters, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
Ranking Member Dick Durbin, Senate Committee on the Judiciary