

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 18, 2025

Acting Executive Associate Director Robert Hammer
Homeland Security Investigations
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St SW
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Acting Executive Associate Director Hammer,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us last week. We write to express our continued outrage with the conduct of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents who attempted to enter two Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) elementary schools earlier this month. We are deeply concerned that HSI officers attempted to question several children, between first and sixth grade, during the school day apparently without contacting or coordinating in advance with the schools, parents or guardians, or state or local child welfare agencies. Though the agents were purportedly there to conduct a “welfare check” on the children, their actions instead terrorized hundreds of thousands of students across Los Angeles and undermine public trust. We urge you to ensure that HSI does not conduct any additional “welfare checks” on school premises and that ICE agents do not attempt to visit or enter schools without a warrant.

We understand from our conversation with you that the stated purpose of HSI agents at the school was not to conduct immigration enforcement, but instead to undertake a “welfare check” on formerly unaccompanied children. We do not understand why, if you obtained evidence that led you to believe that these children were in danger, your agency has not made a referral to the California Department of Social Services and did not coordinate with the school in advance of the “welfare check” regarding potential child welfare or trafficking concerns.

When we spoke, we informed you that reports indicated that, while attempting to enter the schools, HSI officers falsely told school staff that they received permission from the families to speak with their children. You informed us that you were unfamiliar with those details and would look into the matter. We would like to understand what steps you are taking to review and address your agents’ conduct, including determining why they said they received permission to speak with children from their families when that was not the case.

We also request that you provide us with a full briefing on the nature, scale, and objectives of, and policies and protocols surrounding these “welfare checks,” including whether there was any officer training, coordination with victim services, or consultation with experts about conducting these visits with a victim-centered approach, as well as whether ICE is contacting children’s attorneys of record prior to conducting “welfare checks” of represented children. We further request information on what, if any, enforcement actions against formerly unaccompanied children and/or their sponsors ICE has performed in connection with the “welfare checks” both in California and nationally, including any initiation of removal proceedings, detentions, or removals.

These types of “welfare checks” scare children and their family members, rather than promote their safety. If ICE and HSI want to ensure unaccompanied children’s welfare, these agencies should urge the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services and the White House to restore legal and social services for these children, rather than terrorizing them and their classmates at school.

We ask that you respond to our questions by May 2, 2025. We urge you to end any efforts to conduct “welfare checks” on school premises and to ensure that ICE agents do not attempt to visit or enter schools without a warrant.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator