



Washington State Legislature

July 16, 2018

Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen,

We, the undersigned members of the Washington State Legislature, write to express our strong support for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of your agency. We are disturbed by recent protests and statements from elected officials that have urged elimination of ICE or a substantial reduction in its enforcement ability. We understand at least one member of Congress from Washington State has expressed support for legislation to abolish ICE.

This is counterproductive. While people of good will may differ on the best way to enforce border security and on recent policy decisions regarding families intercepted while attempting to cross the border illegally, common sense dictates some entity must be tasked with enforcing federal law and protecting U.S. citizens.

ICE was created following the attacks on our country on September 11, 2001. These attacks are a stark reminder of the danger we face if we are not vigilant against those who enter the country illegally and wish to do us harm. We note that immigration enforcement is only one of the duties performed by ICE and its 20,000 employees.

- ICE works closely with law enforcement to combat human trafficking.
- ICE keeps keep illegal drugs and weapons out of our country.
- ICE has played an integral role in combatting international criminal gangs such as MS-13.

We are concerned about the costs that could be imposed on our state due to elimination of ICE or a reduction in its duties, as state government may be expected to pick up the slack. This is of particular importance at a time when Washington state will lose \$53 million annually in federal funding due to mismanagement of Western State Hospital in Steilacoom, Washington. We would appreciate information regarding the amount spent by ICE to protect the citizens of Washington state. We begin our budgeting process in January, so receiving that information before the end of the year would be helpful. We hope we will not have to pick up these expenses which are currently being paid by the federal government, but we have to prepare in case some are successful in eliminating your department and the protections it provides to Washingtonians.

As a state with major ports and many high-profile tourist destinations, in addition to a well-travelled international border, Washington relies on ICE as a critical element of our defense. We therefore express our strong support for ICE and appreciation for its employees who serve our nation and help keep our citizens safe. We are strongly opposed to any legislation or statements that undermine its important mission.

Best regards,



Senator Mike Padden
4th District



Senator Mark Schoesler
9th District



Senator Jan Angel
26th District



Senator Barbara Bailey
10th District

NOTE: In addition to the members listed above, **6** other Washington state Senators and **12** Representatives have signed this letter. Their names are not included here because of legislative restrictions on election-year communications.