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January 21, 2026

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Noem,

As the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues to violate the constitutional rights of Illinoisans and other Americans through large-scale, multi-agency surge operations like Operation Midway Blitz, I write to urgently request answers to basic oversight questions from Congress on these operations. This letter follows multiple previous attempts by Members of the Illinois delegation to obtain essential information, which have so far gone unanswered.¹

Despite the Department's claims of targeting "the worst of the worst," the reality is that the effectiveness of your immigration enforcement operations does not support those claims. As has been reported, in a recent court filing, DHS listed 614 people arrested as part of Operation Midway Blitz, but only 16, or 2.6 percent, of them have criminal histories of any kind.² Instead, DHS is sweeping up U.S. citizens, legal immigrants, and people with no criminal record. I am extremely concerned about reports of American citizens detained and arrested as part of these operations and the lack of transparency and tracking to ensure your agents are not wrongfully detaining my constituents.

While DHS operated under a full-year continuing resolution in fiscal year 2025, DHS received an unprecedented amount of funding from Public Law 119-21. However, the costs and sources to

¹ <https://underwood.house.gov/media/press-releases/ranking-member-lauren-underwood-demands-full-accounting-dhs-secretary-kristi>,
https://www.durbin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/il_delegation_letter_to_secretary_noem.pdf,
<https://ramirez.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/ramirez.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/letter-to-ice-fod-hott-on-meeting-to-discuss-pressing-matters.pdf>, <https://quigley.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/quigley.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/10.27.25-il-delegation-request-to-dhs-ig-re-due-process-and-use-of-force.pdf>

² <https://www.npr.org/2025/11/17/nx-s1-5611168/doj-records-show-hundreds-of-immigrants-arrested-in-chicago-had-no-criminal-histories>

afford these surge operations remain unclear. Further, the duration of these surge operations and dependency on federal law enforcement outside of DHS—including but not limited to agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the U.S. Marshals Service—raise serious questions about responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. I am deeply concerned that the redirection of resources from agencies outside of DHS to enforce laws outside of their immediate jurisdiction, as well as the misuse of DHS’s own resources, makes communities less safe by ultimately taking them away from priorities including counterterrorism, cybersecurity, counternarcotics, child sexual abuse and exploitation, human trafficking, and other serious security threats.

Since the announcement of *Operation Midway Blitz* in early September, I have attempted to get information on the operation, including through numerous requests for calls with leadership at the components involved, and access to various facilities in the Chicago area of responsibility. The Department has repeatedly declined to make senior officials available upon request, obstructed and delayed visits to relevant facilities, and has impaired congressional constituent casework and oversight in contravention of existing law. Congress has a responsibility to conduct oversight of all aspects of the Department, and a crucial part of that work is for Appropriators like myself to understand how it is implementing the taxpayer funds that Congress has provided. To that end, I request answers to my questions below no later than February 15, 2026.

1. Please provide the total amount spent by the Department on Operation Midway Blitz since September 6, 2025. Include the funding sources used, such as annual appropriations or Public Law 119-21, and provide a full breakout of all expenses by component, account, and PPA. This breakout should include, but not be limited to, purchases of body worn cameras, overtime, TDY expenses, transportation, travel, lodging, per diem, vehicle rentals, contracted space, and any outstanding costs or obligations tied to the operation. Since spending on surge operations including Midway Blitz is not discussed in your FY25 spend plan or any of the reprogramming and transfer notifications received by the House Appropriations Committee this year, please specify any shortfalls in other agencies or programs resulting from this spending.
2. Please provide all projected costs to the Department for Fiscal Year 2026, including projected resource requirements across all participating DHS components.
3. How many federal agents, including those outside of DHS, have been deployed to support Operation Midway Blitz (by agency)? Please provide the overall total as well as the average length of any TDY assignments.
4. Please provide all overtime, hazard pay, and premium pay expenditures associated with the operation. Indicate whether any personnel exceeded statutory pay caps and identify the authorities you relied upon to approve those payments.

5. Please provide a full account of legal expenses incurred by the Department related to this operation. This should include litigation costs, tort claims, settlements, and any costs associated with responding to administrative claims.
6. Please provide the number and type of transportation assets used, including DHS-owned aircraft, contract carriers, leased vehicles, and government vehicles. For each category, provide total usage hours and associated costs.
7. Please provide any IAAs or MOAs with federal partners. If reimbursement is included in any agreement, please provide a projection of the amount DHS anticipates reimbursing to each federal agency including the funding source.
8. Please provide any IAAs or MOAs with State or local partners. If reimbursement is included in any agreement, please provide a projection of the amount DHS anticipates reimbursing to each federal agency including the funding source.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Underwood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress