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SIXTH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
STRATEGIC COMPETITION BETWEEN THE
UNITED STATES AND THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY



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February 2, 2026

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Joseph B. Edlow
Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
5900 Capital Gateway Dr,
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Dear Secretary Noem and Director Edlow,

I write to express my concern and seek clarity regarding recent reports that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has begun to reassigned employees based in New England to Minnesota for the purpose of aiding Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations.¹ USCIS is an agency focused on administering lawful immigration, and the deployment of its public servants in a law enforcement capacity is a betrayal of that mission.

USCIS is a civilian agency charged with administering lawful immigration benefits, adjudicating applications, and ensuring due process. When USCIS fails to carry out these duties, the consequences are immediate and far-reaching: families remain separated, workers lose lawful employment authorization, employers face uncertainty, and individuals who are eligible for legal status are pushed into prolonged limbo.

At present, USCIS is already struggling under a significant and well-documented application backlog, totaling approximately 11.3 million pending cases nationwide.² At the same time, USCIS staffing levels have declined over recent years to below authorized levels, even as

¹ VT Digger, *Vermont USCIS employees tapped to help ICE enforcement in Minnesota*, <https://vtdigger.org/2026/01/21/vermont-uscis-employees-tapped-to-help-ice-enforcement-in-minnesota/>

² The Economic Times, *US immigration backlog hits all-time high with 11.3 million pending applications*, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/migrate/us-immigration-backlog-hits-all-time-high-with-11-3-million-pending-applications/articleshow/122356647.cms?from=mdr>

application volumes and processing complexity have increased.³ This mismatch between workload and capacity has exacerbated processing delays and strained the agency's ability to meet its statutory obligations. These backlogs directly affect families, workers, employers, and communities who depend on the timely adjudication of immigration benefits.

Against this backdrop, reassigning USCIS employees away from their adjudicatory functions to support ICE operations in other states raises serious concerns. Such reassignments risk further delaying the processing of immigration benefits and undermining USCIS's ability to carry out its lawful mission. They also raise questions about whether employees are being placed into roles for which they were neither hired nor trained.

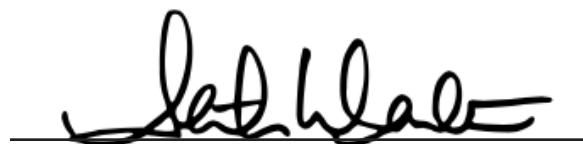
To understand the scope and consequences of these actions, I request immediate answers to the following questions:

- How many officers have been reassigned? And what rights do the assigned officers have to decline the reassignment?
- What are the specific purposes for these reassignments?
- What specific training, if any, have these employees received to perform enforcement duties typically reserved for ICE or CBP, and what safety protocols are in place for them?
- Given the agency has a massive backlog of applications, what steps is USCIS taking to ensure this backlog does not grow further due to these reassignments?

It is my goal to ensure that USCIS employees of New England, who have dedicated their careers to the fair and lawful adjudication of immigration benefits and fraud detection, are not being put in harm's way while doing work outside the scope of their position or training. Congress and the public deserve transparency about how and why these decisions are being made.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seth Moulton", is written over a horizontal line.

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

³ Federal News Network, *USCIS workforce bounces back, but agency faces murky funding future*, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/budget/2024/12/uscis-workforce-bounces-back-but-agency-faces-murky-funding-future/>