Statement by Chris Crane, Vice President of Detention and Removal Operations (DRO),

National Immigration and Customs Enforcement Council 118

of the

American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

Before the

Subcommittee on Border, Maritime and Global Counterterrorism

House Homeland Security Committee

December 10, 2009

Chairman Sanchez and Members of the Subcommittee:

Good morning. My name is Chris Crane and I am the Vice President of Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) of the National Immigration and Customs Enforcement Council 118 of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). Council 118 is the union representing approximately 7,200 ICE employees who work primarily in Detention and Removal Operations. I have been an ICE Immigration and Customs Enforcement Officer for the past 6.5 years. During that time, I have observed many well-intentioned plans developed by this agency to improve operations, only to see them fail due to a lack of resources, commitment or leadership.

In my capacity as an ICE Immigration Enforcement Agent (IEA), I have worked the Criminal Alien Program (also known as CAP) for approximately five years. CAP is a program within ICE which targets criminal aliens who were first arrested by local police or other Federal law enforcement agencies and charged criminally. I have also served as a member of an ICE Fugitive Operations Team whose primary function was to apprehend foreign nationals who had not departed the United States after receiving an Order of Deportation from a Federal immigration judge.

ICE DETENTION REFORM PLAN

Before commenting on the ICE DRO plan, I want to make clear that the Union has had no involvement in developing the detention reforms which are currently being proposed by ICE and the Department of Homeland Security. The Union learned of ICE's plan to reform its detention facilities through a CNN broadcast. Since that time, our requests to participate in the planning or implementation of these reforms or provide any type of input have been unsuccessful. It was not until November 10-13, 2009, that three Union representatives attended briefings regarding the Agency's proposed reforms. Since no detailed written plans have been provided to the Council, I can only address verbal statements made by ICE and DHS representatives during these briefings, which were later communicated to me by union representatives who were present.

The Union's overall impression of these proposed reforms is not positive. We do not believe that the combined efforts of ICE and DHS have resulted in proposals that will effectively safeguard non-criminal ICE detainees or ICE employees. In fact, we are quite concerned that these proposed changes could potentially result in heightened risks for some groups of ICE detainees as well as ICE employees and contract guards.

The Agency has proposed the construction of multiple new detention facilities throughout the United States. Each facility will house approximately 2,000 ICE detainees. The detainees will be allowed to move freely throughout each of the new ICE detention facilities 24 hours a day.

Phyllis Coven, Acting Director of the ICE Office of Detention Policy and Planning (ODPP) stated that one goal in constructing these new detention facilities would be to reflect living conditions that we might find in our own homes. While these measures clearly reduce security within ICE detention facilities, ICE has concurrently announced its goal of having a nationwide detainee population consisting of at least **85 to 90% convicted criminals within the next 12 months.**

Even though ICE has identified these new facilities as "low custody detention," new screening procedures for ICE detainees will classify both criminal and non-criminal detainees as "low custody," resulting in high criminal populations in these facilities mixed with individuals who have had little or no contact with police in their lives. With thousands of criminal detainees moving freely about each facility, ICE's ability to effectively observe, monitor and control inappropriate behavior and safeguard detainees will be greatly diminished. Previously identified problems such as alleged sexual misconduct by contract guards with female detainees could rise as access to detainee populations will be increased in the open campus environment.

FULL CONTACT VISITATION

ICE has proposed full contact visitation rights for detainees, but maintained its Agency wide ban on conducting strip searches. To our knowledge, ICE will be the only Federal or State Agency to have such a policy. Agency representatives acknowledged that contraband smuggled into ICE facilities will increase. With detainee populations of 85 to 90% or greater convicted criminals, and the unstoppable presence of gangs, we believe that this policy on full contact visits without strip searches could dramatically increase the presence of illegal drugs and weapons inside ICE facilities. When questioned about the proposed full contact visits, Agency representatives admitted that they were not aware of ICE's Agency wide ban on strip searches and therefore did not consider that fact when creating the proposal of full contact visits. Union representatives and field managers present were unsettled by this disclosure.

These proposed changes (and others like them) demonstrate not only a fundamental misunderstanding of who is housed in these facilities, but also indicate a stronger desire by the Agency to create a harmonious environment, rather than a safe and efficient one. The lack of security and oversight within the new facilities will negatively impact both ICE detainees and ICE employee's alike. In the midst of criminal populations such as this, AFGE simply does not understand why ICE employees will not be provided with the same security measures as State, Local and Federal law enforcement officers working in the jails and prisons around the nation where ICE detainees were originally held on criminal charges.

ICE DETAINEE POPULATIONS

The majority of ICE immigration related arrests are presently generated by the ICE DRO Criminal Alien Program, and in some areas, its non-Federal counterpart, the 287(g) Program. This means the majority of ICE arrests and therefore the majority of individuals in ICE custody, come from County and State jails. These individuals were arrested by another law enforcement agency and charged criminally prior to ICE taking them into custody. This information would appear to be in conflict with public reports stating that only 50% of ICE detainees are convicted criminals. In fact, an ICE representative recently stated that only 53% of all ICE detainees have criminal convictions. However that same individual was unable to elaborate on the status of the remaining 47% of ICE detainees, as is frequently the case with public reports on the matter. Of the 47% of unaccounted for ICE detainees, the ICE Council believes that as many as 30 to 40% were arrested on criminal charges but released to ICE without prosecution because local jails and prosecutors nationwide are overwhelmed by the criminal alien problem and lack the resources to house and prosecute the arrestees. This has resulted in ICE becoming a dumping ground for individuals arrested on criminal charges who were never cleared of those charges in a court of law.

CAP officers focus on individuals who have been arrested for serious crimes such as sex offenses, crimes of violence and drug distribution. It is not uncommon for these prisoners to be released to ICE custody without conviction within ten minutes to 24 hours following notification to the jail by ICE of the prisoner's immigration status. Virtually none of these prisoners were released to ICE because they were cleared of the charges against them in a court of law, but rather because County and State detention facilities were overcrowded and underfunded. This is an epidemic problem nationwide. We believe that many of the ICE detainees who were arrested on criminal charges, but were never cleared of those charges in a court of law, do pose a significant threat to the public, our employees, and most certainly other ICE detainees who have no criminal history whatsoever.

ICE should avoid implementing any policy that allows many of the very worst criminals to be released because jails in our local communities lack the funding to prosecute. Likewise, ICE cannot ignore the criminal arrest records of aliens without convictions when classifying them for detention or as part of any overall threat assessment. Arrest history and prior immigration history are typically the only records available to ICE officers as foreign nationals in the U.S. illegally generally have no other tangible records. Ignoring the criminal arrest records of detainees who were not cleared of their charges in a court of law is the equivalent of playing Russian roulette with the safety of the public, ICE officers and most certainly the other detainees in ICE custody whose safety is our responsibility. The Union believes that ICE leadership has an obligation to the American public and ICE employees to release more accurate statistics regarding detainee populations so that there can be transparent and informed discussion with respect to the threat level of ICE detainees and its impact on proposed detention reforms.

ICE LOW CUSTODY FACILITIES

ICE and DHS defined "low custody" as any person who has not been convicted of one of the following five charges: murder, rape, armed robbery, kidnapping, or assault with a deadly weapon. By that definition, any person who did not receive a conviction for one of those five offenses would be housed in the proposed low custody facilities. I will begin by saying that the last ICE detainee who assaulted me in a detention setting, and received a 13 month federal sentence for assaulting a Federal officer, had never been convicted of any of these crimes. Furthermore, since he did not use a weapon in the commission of the assault, according to ICE's proposed screening criteria, he would still be placed in a low custody ICE facility if arrested again. He would be housed with individuals convicted of non-violent crimes such as DUI or fraud. He may also be housed with individuals without a single arrest. He will freely move about the facility 24 hours a day with 2000 other detainees who are almost all convicted criminals themselves.

DHS stated that it is modeling the proposed ICE low custody facilities after a model currently in use by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP). It is our understanding that BOP prisoners housed in BOP low custody facilities have typically proven themselves over long periods of time (often years) to be trustworthy or rehabilitated before being placed in a BOP low custody prison.

Conversely, the average custody time of an ICE detainee is just six weeks. This is often closer to one to two weeks. ICE DRO officers will not have years, but instead typically less than 1 full day to observe incoming detainees and screen them for low custody detention. DHS has proposed that an intake questionnaire be used to screen the detainees for placement in the low custody facilities. We believe that any questionnaire would have very limited success in ensuring that non-criminal detainees or unarmed Federal law enforcement officers working in these open campus criminal facilities would be safe.

Similar detainee screening questionnaires currently in use by ICE have been ineffective. A recent article in *The Houston Chronicle* entitled "Criminal Deportees Often Fly Unescorted," as well as formal complaints by Senator Mary Landrieu and Congressman Jason Chaffetz illustrate that fact. All discuss Threat Assessments; a screening document used by ICE DRO officers to determine if an ICE detainee who must be transported via commercial aircraft is a threat to the public and requires an officer escort. ICE DRO officers routinely utilize the threat assessment screening questionnaires and advise that certain detainees do pose a threat and recommend full officer escorts as a safety precaution, only to have ICE supervisors over ride these recommendations because of funding and manpower issues. The end result has been that ICE is now routinely placing dangerous convicted criminals unescorted on commercial aircraft. The screening questionnaire is ineffective because the recommendations of DRO officers are ignored. As cited in the news article, one unescorted ICE detainee recently charged the cockpit of a commercial jetliner and had to be restrained by passengers.

ASSAULTS ON OFFICERS

ICE DRO officers are frequently assaulted by ICE detainees. Because the majority of our detainees come from local jails and State and Federal prisons, our employees are routinely exposed to some of the most dangerous criminals and gang members within the United States. ICE does little if anything to track these assaults or encourage our officers to file reports when they have been assaulted. Most assaults against ICE officers currently go unreported and are almost never prosecuted. AFGE is very concerned that ICE's plans to abandon vital security protocols currently in place in detention facilities, while intensifying efforts to arrest criminal aliens, will undoubtedly place ICE officers and contract guards at greater risk.

RELOCATING ICE EMPLOYEES

ICE has stated that the proposed detention facilities are to be built in new locations solely for the purpose of ensuring that detainees can be closer to their families for family visitations while in custody. ICE has stated that its employees will be forced to move when the new facilities are completed. If ICE's proposals are implemented, ICE employees will be permanently uprooted from their families and communities in order to make visitation easier for ICE detainees who on average are in custody just six weeks – often times only one to two weeks. ICE employees will be forced to take their children out of schools, give up their homes, leave behind aging parents and sick family members, and experience financial hardships in order to improve visitation for detainees who are in custody for six weeks or less.

DETENTION ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

The Immigration Enforcement Agent (IEA) position was created in 2003 following the establishment of ICE. IEAs have the same immigration arrest authority as ICE Deportation Officers and ICE Special Agents. The primary purpose of the IEA position was to take over the ICE Criminal Alien Program which was previously performed by ICE Special Agents. However, ICE also assigned IEAs to perform detention functions and transportation duties, which resulted in a substantial increase of work for the IEAs. It was the equivalent of rolling two full time positions into one. As a result, both the Criminal Alien Program and ICE detention functions have suffered. It is a failure that ICE headquarters has been reluctant to acknowledge.

Prior to ICE, a legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) position called the **Detention Enforcement Officer (DEO)** existed. This position did not have immigration arrest authority but did perform all of the full time detention and transportation duties for INS detention facilities and offices throughout the United States. When the DEO position existed, job responsibilities were clearly defined. INS had officers to perform law enforcement functions as

well as officers to perform detention duties. It is a model that the U.S. Marshal's Service and many sheriffs' departments have utilized very successfully for many years. The Marshals are able to perform both their law enforcement and detention missions effectively because unlike ICE they have maintained a separate position that manages detention, performs transportation functions and provides court security.

It is our belief that ICE made a critical mistake when it ended the DEO program. The heavy work volume and complexity of the Criminal Alien Program and failures within the ICE detention system have identified a clear need for ICE to have both IEAs and DEOs. DEOs would greatly improve DRO's ability to perform its law enforcement and detention functions. Removing detention duties from the IEA position would drastically increase DRO's ability to arrest criminal aliens and process cases in an efficient and expeditious manner. With regard to detention, DEOs would provide ICE's national detention program with the increased physical presence and oversight that is currently lacking.

PRIVATE CONTRACT DETENTION FACILITIES

With regard to the conduct of contract employees working with ICE detainees, I must state very clearly that I have not personally witnessed misconduct by contract workers, nor do I have access to information gained from Agency investigations into these matters. The only information that I can pass on to this committee is that which I have been given from ICE officers in the field.

With that said, I have been told that some contract workers in certain facilities have allegedly engaged in consensual sexual misconduct with detainees and it has also been alleged that there have been instances in which contract guards have raped female detainees. It is also alleged that contractors are smuggling contraband into the detention facilities. In areas near the southern border of the United States where contract workers also assist with the transportation of detainees, it has been alleged that contract guards have been involved in, and arrested for, smuggling foreign nationals into the United States. If any of these allegations are true, it certainly begs the question, "what is ICE doing to stop these problems?" As one veteran ICE officer stated to me last week, during a conversation regarding contract guards smuggling contraband into detention facilities in his area, "ICE managers are well aware of the problems in the contract facilities, but don't seem interested in doing anything about it."

While this statement may surprise many in the American public, it would not surprise ICE employees who are well aware of problems within ICE management and the unethical manner in which ICE internal investigations are conducted.

ICE INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS

No checks and balances currently exist within ICE. ICE investigates itself. Because ICE investigates itself there is no transparency and there is no reform or improvement. ICE managers have complete control over the investigative process. The end result has been that both ineffective supervisors and supervisors engaged in misconduct are not disciplined, retain their positions and are regularly promoted. ICE employees who voice their concerns about general problems, formally report more serious matters for investigation, or participate in the Union are relentlessly retaliated against by Agency managers who rely on the ICE internal investigative process as a tool for retaliation. The result has been a consistent decline in employee morale and widespread fear among employees to report wrongdoing. This contributes to the large scale inefficiency that presently exists within the Agency. It is our opinion that any attempts to reform the detention system will be unsuccessful without reforms that hold ICE managers accountable and protect employees from retaliation.

On March 15, 2009, AFGE Local 3806 sent a letter to DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano informing her that problems existed within all ICE internal investigative processes, to include those conducted by the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR). Specifically, it was reported that no avenue currently exists for ICE employees to make whistleblower disclosures without fear of retaliation by the Agency. On April 29, 2009, the Secretary's office responded and stated that the matter had been turned over to the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG). Also in April 2009, the Union provided a copy of the letter to ICE Assistant Secretary John Morton. To date, the Union has never been contacted or received any communications from either Secretary Napolitano's office or Assistant Secretary Morton. The DHS Office of Inspector General has also dismissed the concerns raised by the Union as the Union has never heard from anyone in that office to even acknowledge that it had received the complaint and that it would investigate the allegations.

ICE OVERSIGHT

Oversight must be removed from ICE, otherwise ICE managers and senior leadership will continue to have complete control over the investigative process and the outcome. The end result will be no different than it presently exists today as management protects ineffective supervisors, conceals misconduct and mismanagement, and retaliates against employees who adhere to ICE policies on reporting malfeasance.

As part of its proposed detention reforms, ICE has designated oversight of the ICE detention centers to its internal investigative division, the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR). It has already been well-established that internal policing simply does not work. This was evidenced in 1998 during the Internal Revenue Service hearings before the Senate Finance Committee where horrific testimony disclosed taxpayer and employee abuses that went

unchecked because of the failures of the internal Inspection Services. As a result, the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 was enacted and an independent investigatory office, the Office of Inspector General for Tax Administration, was created to remove investigative authorities from the Agency. What was not considered, however, was that many of the Inspection Services investigators were moved to the newly-created organization and it took many years for the perception of the transplanted Inspection Services to change. It is our opinion that any internal oversight will not be objective as long as the Agency is able to manipulate the investigative process. Again, oversight, to include that of ICE detention facilities, must be removed from ICE.

DETENTION SERVICE MANAGERS

Another DHS/ICE proposal on detention reform will create 23 GS-14 positions called Detention Service Managers (DSM). Each of the 23 DSMs hired will monitor and enforce detention standards at ICE owned facilities and contract facilities. Currently, these duties are supposed to be performed by contract employees called COTRs (Contract Officer Technical representative). ICE has made clear that it plans to eventually replace all of the Contract COTRs with DSMs. The Union and managers in the field appear to be in agreement that the Contractor COTRs are not providing adequate oversight of detention facilities utilized by ICE. However, we do not agree with the DSM remedy as proposed by ICE. Because of problems with Contract COTRs, ICE already sends ICE employees to COTR training out of a necessity for better oversight. "ICE Employee COTRs" are already performing oversight duties in the field. However, since these Contractor COTRs are currently designated by ICE as having the official authority of oversight, "ICE Employee COTRs" are not as effective as they could be. The Union proposes that by giving the current "ICE Employee COTRs" (who consist of both managers and employees) the same authority and training as the proposed DSM position, ICE could eliminate and replace far more than 23 Contractor COTRs – and ICE could literally do it overnight at less expense. In fact, Agency representatives acknowledged during the briefing that current "ICE Employee COTRs" would be providing on the job training to the newly hired GS-14 DSMs. We see the Union proposal as having the potential for far greater impact on detention reform in much less time.

ICE OFFICERS NOT PROPERLY UTILIZED

ICE DRO currently has two law enforcement officer positions which are the ICE Immigration Enforcement Agent (IEA) and ICE Deportation Officer (DO) positions. Both positions have full immigration arrest authority and their combined officer numbers account for a substantial percentage of the small number of law enforcement officers nationwide who have immigration arrest authority. Both positions are very limited in number and both are in high demand

throughout the United States, especially as it pertains to criminal aliens. However, starting under the previous Administration, ICE has initiated practices and policies that have greatly reduced the ability of ICE officers to provide much-needed law enforcement functions. Instead of providing adequate numbers of ICE support staff to perform clerical work and data entry, ICE has delegated these duties to ICE officers at the expense of their assigned law enforcement duties.

In some areas such as the Texas Rio Grande Valley, hundreds of ICE officers are not being utilized to work the Criminal Alien Program in local jails and prisons. The majority of ICE DRO agents and officers throughout the United States are prohibited from making street arrests as ICE is more concerned about negative publicity than assisting State and Federal law enforcement agencies who attempt to reduce crime and gang activity in their areas. Likewise, ICE officers complain that when the danger levels of their duties are heightened, ICE does not allow officers to take needed equipment like shotguns because supervisors are more concerned about the possibility of negative publicity than the safety of their own officers.

MANPOWER AND MORALE

With an existing workforce that is drastically understaffed and overworked, senior leadership continues to create massive new programs that will require hundreds if not thousands of new employees to successfully implement. However at ICE, manpower intensive programs are simply implemented at the local and national level without any planning or consideration for the staffing and resources needed to accomplish them.

ICE managers have already announced that ICE DRO is taking over the Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC), which will require DRO employees to man a 24 hour national call center to assist law enforcement officers from other agencies in the field. This added responsibility is only one of many that ICE plans to implement nationally through a new program called Secure Communities. Secure Communities will require that 100% of all U.S. Citizens and non-citizens booked into every jail in the United States be screened in ICE databases. We anticipate that this will create an unprecedented and large scale increase in the number of requests for ICE assistance as well as an equally large workload increase to ICE employees with the rise of ICE arrests, transportation duties, and needs for detention space. We have heard no proposals from the Agency regarding the large scale hiring that will be needed to perform these new duties. ICE does not have the manpower, resources or funding to support what it is already doing, yet ICE continues to implement many new large scale programs and initiatives, and ignores the warnings and grave concerns expressed by Union officials, employees and its own managers.

Over the years, Agency surveys of employee morale have consistently shown morale among ICE employees to be among the lowest of all Federal employees, something which ICE leadership

has failed to address. Morale will continue to decline as ICE implements new programs but fails to consider its employees and the already heavy workload they carry. Many managers have never performed the duties that our employees currently perform, nor do they have experience with the tools and practices now in use to perform those duties. A complete disconnect exists between Agency managers, their employees, and what's happening in the field. Directives coming from ICE Field Offices (essentially District Offices) and ICE Headquarters appear to lack any input from the field, are often completely misguided and nonsensical, and create not only unnecessary work for ICE employees but also confusion and outrage.

There is no uniformity or consistency throughout ICE as each Field Office creates its own fiefdom and makes its own rules. As just one example, pay practices are different in every ICE office across the country, and those practices change constantly. When the Union notifies the Agency of legal violations regarding employee pay issues, we are ignored and forced to waste taxpayer dollars to litigate entitlements that are already granted by law.

The negotiated agreement between the Agency and the Union as well as Federal Statute is ignored and managers are not held accountable for their actions or inactions. The inaction by the Agency to take care of its workforce demonstrates that it does not care about its most important resource. The Agency's Office of Employee and Labor Relations lacks concern for consistent policies, productive human resources programs, effective labor-management relations and fair and equitable treatment of employees. Rather than advise senior leadership and managers that laws, rules, regulations and the negotiated agreement must be followed, it focuses its efforts toward supporting problematic managers who commit acts of misconduct, abuse their authority, and fabricate allegations and take unnecessary and excessive disciplinary actions against employees.

PAY EQUITY FOR DRO EMPLOYEES

In October of this year, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano suddenly and without warning, announced that approximately 50,000 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers would be noncompetitively promoted from GS-11 to GS-12. The much smaller group of approximately 2,000 ICE IEAs were excluded in this upgrade although efforts have been underway through attempted legislation for no less than two years to raise their grades to GS-11. IEAs are assigned duties previously performed by GS-13 Special Agents and attend an academy that is lengthier than that of many of the CBP officers recently promoted to GS-12. IEAs have no career ladder promotions even though they share the same job series with GS-12 ICE Deportation Officers. ICE may be the only State or Federal law enforcement agency in the nation that does not provide a career ladder to its own officers and instead hires less qualified candidates from other agencies for higher paying nonsupervisory positions.

Although the ICE Detention and Removal Assistants (DRAs) are only at the GS-7 pay grade there are no existing career ladder positions within the Agency to afford them any opportunity to improve their livelihood through advancement and opportunity to move to other positions. For years it has been rumored that ICE will finally acknowledge the work of these employees and promote them because of the continuing assignment of more complex duties, yet the Agency never acts.

The Agency has actively gathered work statistics from ICE Deportation Officers (DOs) for several years. A recommendation for promotion to the GS-13 grade level from the previous ICE Director of DRO to Assistant Secretary John Morton accidentally became public several months ago, but with years of research and recommendations from senior level ICE managers, no changes were made and as a consequence this group was also ignored during Secretary Napolitano's massive promotions.

It is our opinion that DHS and ICE have failed for years to acknowledge the work of DRO employees and provide pay parity for its employees. To leave these highly deserving DRO employees out of this massive promotion demonstrates yet another failure by ICE, a failure that has taken morale to an all new low. ICE employees will now begin a mass exodus to higher paying jobs in other agencies while at the same time qualified individuals who would otherwise apply for ICE entry level positions will take their applications to the agencies who afford them advancement opportunity.

OUTSOURCING OF EMPLOYEE WORK

Contrary to the mandates established by President Obama to return Federal employee work to the government, ICE recently awarded a new contract in the amount of $71.5 million to an outside contractor. This contract, which is for services for the period September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2014, includes work that is currently performed by bargaining unit employees. The Union believes that the Agency's goal is to eventually eliminate the Detention and Removal Assistant (DRA) positions in ICE and will accomplish this goal through a reduction in hiring and attrition of the existing employees while simultaneously increasing contractor personnel to perform the DRA work.

In a continuing repudiation of the existing negotiated agreement between management and the union, the Union was first notified of this contract on September 21, 2009 and only after the awarded contract execution date of September 11, 2009. During the briefing that was provided to the Union by ICE on September 21, 2009, officials attempted to convince us that this contract was not considered "contracting out" but rather "contracting in," a newly-coined phrase by ICE management. The Union was also notified that provisions exist within the life of this contract to amend it to increase the scope and monetary value of the contract.

CONCLUSION

I hope that my testimony here today provides the Members of this Subcommittee with a clear view of the status of the DRO program at ICE. Clearly, there are problems and great risks associated with the Detention Reform Plan that have not been adequately considered.

Perhaps most troubling to the ICE Council is the fact that the Union, ICE employees, and managers in the field have been excluded from the development of the proposed detention reforms. While we always welcome new input, we are certain that no one possesses more knowledge regarding ICE detention than ICE employees. It is unthinkable that the Union and ICE employees have been excluded from this process. We certainly expected more from this Administration. However, we remain optimistic and look forward to opportunities for participation in the future.

We commend this Committee's efforts to bring oversight to the activities of this troubled agency, and unconditionally commit our resources to this or any future inquiries made by this honorable body. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak on behalf of our ICE employees.

This concludes my testimony, and I welcome any questions that you may have.