

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
CHAIR
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

July 16, 2026

The Honorable Janet Mills
Governor
State of Maine
1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Governor Mills:

Thank you for your July 15, 2026, letter in response to Monday's fatal shooting in Biddeford involving Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel. I share your heartbreak for the people of Maine regarding this tragic shooting and agree that we need answers as to what transpired. This is why I, along with the entire Maine delegation, called for a thorough, full, and impartial investigation by the independent Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) into the shooting. Senator King and I also wrote a letter to the Department of Justice requesting that it cooperate with state and local law enforcement to ensure that federal investigations into this shooting remain impartial and comprehensive.

As you may know, in January of this year the House and Senate Appropriations Committees reached a bipartisan agreement on a Fiscal Year 2026 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill. This bill included a number of accountability and transparency measures, such as additional funding for the DHS OIG, specific oversight of programs funded by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) that I voted against, new de-escalation training requirements for ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers, and Department-wide training for personnel on rights for the public to record encounters with ICE and CBP. After the House of Representatives passed the bipartisan negotiated bill, Democratic Senate Appropriations Vice Chair Patty Murray praised these reforms. In a stunning pivot, congressional Democrats walked away from their own negotiated reforms triggering a shutdown of DHS – the longest shutdown in federal government history.

Over the ensuing eight weeks, the White House engaged Senate Democrats to try to negotiate additional meaningful legislative reforms. The White House offered congressional Democrats the following measures:

- Prohibiting DHS from using appropriated funds, including OBBBA funds, to block or stage detention facilities during congressional oversight visits;
- Requiring the use of body-worn cameras for all DHS law enforcement personnel performing civil immigration enforcement duties and providing an additional \$100 million to procure cameras (for a total of \$120 million);

- Prohibiting DHS from knowingly detaining and deporting U.S. citizens during civil immigration enforcement activities;
- Prohibiting civil immigration enforcement operations within sensitive locations, including schools and hospitals;
- Requiring visible numerical identification for officers conducting civil immigration enforcement activities or engaging within the public;
- Requiring ICE to notify local law enforcement before conducting large-scale civil immigration enforcement operations;
- Requiring de-escalation and use of force training of ICE officers and agents; and
- Requiring detention standards of DHS facilities to revert to the previous Administration's standards.

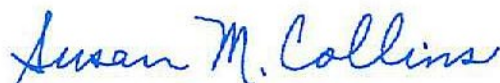
Your letter highlights reforms similar to many of those that the White House proposed. Inexplicably, congressional Democrats rejected these reforms and instead chose to excise funding for ICE and U.S. Border Patrol from the annual appropriations process.

Despite that decision, I worked hard to ensure that the final Fiscal Year 2026 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act retained many of the reforms that were negotiated in January. Included in the April law is \$20 million for body-worn cameras, a seventeen percent increase in funding for the DHS OIG, and \$2 million for de-escalation training. Unfortunately, the DHS shutdown delayed these reforms, and ICE is still waiting for the full deployment of the body-worn cameras and the completion of de-escalation training.

Nevertheless, the shootings this week, both in Maine and Texas, have raised serious questions and demand immediate action. This is why I have called for a halt in non-urgent traffic stops.

While it is clear that ICE needs to improve its performance, it is important to remember that the work ICE does to protect our country goes far beyond immigration enforcement. ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) is tasked with combating cartels, human trafficking, drug smuggling, child exploitation, forced labor, and more. Eliminating ICE would make our country less safe and endanger the lives and welfare of countless individuals.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator