

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 8, 2026

Secretary Markwayne Mullin
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Acting Director David Venturella
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Secretary Mullin and Acting Director Venturella,

We write to renew and update the concerns first raised by Congressman Al Green in his June 2, 2026, letter regarding the continued detention by ICE of Jacob "Ya'akub" Ira Vijandre.¹ Over a year has now passed since Mr. Vijandre's arrest, and recent developments in his case only heighten the urgency of the questions Congressman Green posed to your agencies over four months ago—questions that, to our knowledge, remain unanswered.

Mr. Vijandre, a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient who has lived in the United States since he emigrated from the Philippines at age 14, was arrested at gunpoint outside his home on October 7, 2025. He has no criminal record. He has not been charged with or convicted of any crime, in this country or any other. He spent a decade as a senior safety specialist for American Airlines and was recognized for his service supporting the families of Flight 5342 crash victims after the horrific crash in Washington, D.C. last year. His family's history of service to this country includes two recipients of the Congressional Gold Medal for their service during World War II. As a photojournalist, he is well known for documenting Muslim civic life and social justice movements in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

The administration's stated basis for his detention has been inconsistent and appears to rely substantially on his speech and social media activity. DHS has sought to justify his detention by citing his social media commentary regarding the prosecutions of the Holy Land Foundation Five, his criticism of the treatment of Guantanamo detainees, his advocacy for Palestine, and his engagement with religious Islamic content, including "liking" Instagram posts containing Quranic verses. We are deeply concerned that constitutionally protected political and religious expression is being used as a basis for his continued detention or deportation.

¹ "Concerns Regarding the Detention of Jacob "Ya'akub" Ira Vijandre, Congressman Al Green, June 4, 2026, <https://algreen.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/algreen-evo.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/public-ya-akub-letter-to-mullin-venturella.pdf>.

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

We are also concerned by reports, previously flagged in Congressman Green's June letter, that the FBI approached Mr. Vijandre in November 2023 seeking his cooperation as a confidential informant and that he declined. His DACA status, renewed as recently as May 2024 through May 2026, was subsequently revoked. The proximity and sequence of these events—an FBI approach he declined, followed by a DACA termination and detention grounded largely in the government's characterization of his religious and political speech—continue to raise serious questions about possible retaliation that Congress has not yet received satisfactory answers to.

On September 2, 2026, a federal judge denied the government's attempt to block Mr. Vijandre from seeking release from ICE custody, allowing his habeas challenge to proceed after nearly a year in detention at the Folkston ICE Processing Center in Georgia, over a thousand miles from his home and community. This ruling lends further weight to the concerns Congress raised months ago regarding the legal and constitutional basis for Mr. Vijandre's continued detention and DHS and ICE's failure to provide the accounting Congress is owed.

We renew, in full, the thirteen questions posed in Congressman Green's June 2, 2026 letter, and we request written answers to those questions, along with responses to the following, no later than October 22, 2026:

1. Has DHS or ICE provided any response to the questions posed in Rep. Green's June 2, 2026 letter? If so, please provide that response. If not, please explain the delay.
2. What is the current legal basis asserted for Mr. Vijandre's continued detention, in light of the September 2, 2026 ruling permitting his habeas challenge to proceed?
3. Please explain the discrepancy between DHS's public statements attributing Mr. Vijandre's detention to his social media activity and any subsequent or alternative justification offered in court, including any reliance on visa-overstay or status-related grounds.
4. Please provide all records concerning the FBI's November 2023 outreach to Mr. Vijandre regarding confidential informant cooperation and any communications between the FBI and DHS, ICE, or USCIS referencing Mr. Vijandre between the time of that outreach and the initiation of DACA termination proceedings against him.

Mr. Vijandre has now spent over a year in detention amid serious questions about the government's reliance on his faith, journalism, and political speech in its decision to detain him. We urge the Department to respond fully and promptly, and we ask that DHS take immediate steps toward his release.

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



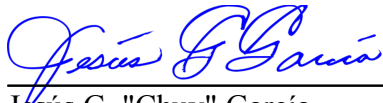
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



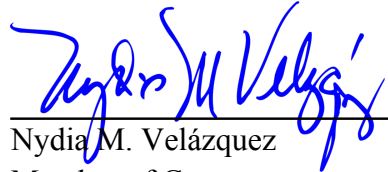
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Analilia Mejia
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



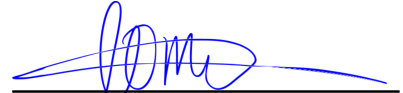
Greg Casar
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



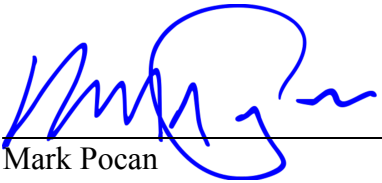
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Adenita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



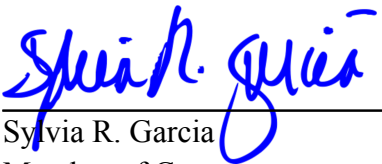
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



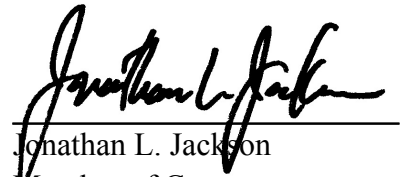
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



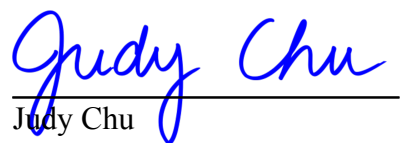
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



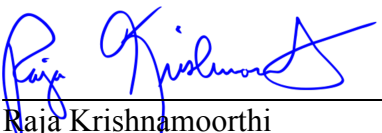
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Randall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Emily" and last name "Randall" clearly distinguishable.

Emily Randall

Member of Congress