

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 8, 2020

Tony Pham
Senior Official Performing the Duties of Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20536-5003

Dear Mr. Pham:

I write today to express grave concern regarding the Trump Administration's ongoing efforts to embolden the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as well as Customs and Border Protection (CBP), to terrorize our immigrant neighbors and implement its xenophobic agenda along the southern border and in communities across our country. From increased ICE raids to the deployment of officers as part of Border Patrol Tactical Units¹, this Administration has engaged in a pattern of escalated hostilities targeting cities throughout the country who uphold the safety and humanity of our immigrant neighbors.

Most recently, disturbing reports out of Boston, Massachusetts – a city I represent – indicate that earlier this week, several officers in unmarked vehicles engaged in an unlawful stop of Mr. Bena Apreala, a Black man and lifelong Boston resident who was jogging in a West Roxbury neighborhood.² According to reports, these officers did not identify themselves as ICE agents and did not provide any rationale for stopping Mr. Apreala. Upon witnessing one officer with an ICE badge, Mr. Apreala asked whether the officers worked for ICE to which one officer responded “yes.” The officers questioned Mr. Apreala requesting personal identification and inquiring whether he had notable tattoos. Only after Mr. Apreala began recording on his cell phone did the officers notify Mr. Apreala that he was free to go. On Wednesday afternoon, reports indicated that a spokesperson from the ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Field Office in Boston confirmed that the officers involved were, in fact, ICE agents.³

¹ Shannon Dooling, SWAT-Like Federal Officers Working in Boston to Assist with ICE Arrests, Dorchester Reporter, (Feb. 20, 2020) <https://www.dotnews.com/2020/swat-federal-officers-working-boston-assist-ice-arrests>

² Shannon Dooling, City Councilors Want Answers After Apparent ‘Unlawful’ Stop in West Roxbury, WBUR News (Oct. 7, 2020), <https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/10/06/massachusetts-ice>.

³ Shannon Dooling, ICE Confirms Immigration Officials Stopped Black Man Jogging in West Roxbury, WBUR News (Oct. 7, 2020), <https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/10/07/ice-officers-west-roxbury-unexplained-stop-jogger>

This incident has understandably left many in our community fearful of a potential uptick in ICE presence and a possible increase in ICE agents' enforcement activities in unmarked vehicles. Mr. Apreala's encounter also raises serious questions about whether ICE officers are using enforcement investigations to engage in racial profiling and stop and frisk policing in our communities.

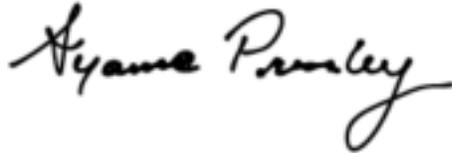
The criminalization and targeting of Black and Brown communities by this Administration must end. The public deserves transparency about the presence of ICE officers in our communities and accountability for any federal officers that may be infringing upon an individual's civil rights. Therefore, I respectfully request responses to the following questions in writing by October 15, 2020:

1. As of 1:00pm on October 7th, 2020 news reports stated that a spokesperson from the ICE ERO Field Office in Boston confirmed that these officers were ICE agents. Can you confirm that every single officer involved in stopping Mr. Apreala was ICE personnel? If not, which other law enforcement agencies (Federal or local) may have been involved in this unlawful stop?
2. According to Mr. Apreala, only one agent was wearing notable identification, indicating that he was an ICE officer. Were any of the other officers involved in stopping Mr. Apreala prominently wearing identification? If not, why not?
3. What policies does ICE currently have regarding the identification of ICE officials and ICE vehicles, in local communities? Please provide any internal memos and guidance that ICE has released to field offices to implement and enforce these policies.
4. According to news reports, when Mr. Apreala notified ICE agents that he was born in the United States, the officers responded with, "immigration isn't the only thing we investigate." Please provide information on the investigative matters that these officers were engaged in leading up to this incident on October 6th, 2020.
5. Please provide any policies, memos, and guidance that the agency has released about any additional law enforcement investigations it is conducting in the Massachusetts 7th Congressional District.
 - a. Please provide the number of ICE agents and personnel that are now engaging in any additional law enforcement activities in local communities throughout the Massachusetts 7th Congressional District.

- b. Please provide data on the number of other ICE stops that may have occurred in the Boston area. Please provide data on the location of such stops, the rationale behind the stop and the race and immigration status of the individual stopped.
- c. Please indicate if local law enforcement or local government were notified of these aforementioned activities.

I appreciate your urgent attention and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress