

BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
12TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS
SENIOR WHIP

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3012

168 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5801

DISTRICT OFFICE:
850 BEAR TAVERN ROAD, SUITE 201
EWING, NEW JERSEY 08628
(609) 883-0026

WEBSITE: WATSONCOLEMAN.HOUSE.GOV

July 16, 2024

Daniel A. Bible
Executive Associate Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Newark Field Office
970 Broad St. 11th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Mr. Bible,

As a Member of Congress, I write to express my deepest concern regarding the conduct of agents involved in an operation carried out by the ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Newark Field Office in Princeton, New Jersey on Wednesday, July 10th, 2024. In addition to the conduct of the agents themselves, I have serious questions as to the process that preceded this operation, and the transparency of the federal agencies involved.

Eyewitness accounts and news reports¹ describe several ERO agents entering Princeton in unmarked vehicles and targeting residents on suspicion of unlawful presence in the United States. It is my understanding that these agents did not provide any advance notice to state or local authorities prior to their arrival, and they did not identify themselves as federal agents once in the municipality. The only identification visible to bystanders were vests reading “police” – misleading residents to assume they were affiliated with the Princeton Police Department. Several Princeton constituents, as well as local and state elected officials, contacted my office, shocked to see unidentified, armed agents roaming the streets without any notification. Their presence had a chilling and intimidating impact on the residents, many of whom were too terrified to leave their homes.

In November 2018, then-New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal issued the “Immigrants Trust Directive”, a statewide policy to improve trust between New Jersey’s law enforcement and the immigrant community. The goal of the policy is to build trust in the community by providing a clear distinction between local law enforcement and federal immigration officials. According to the Department of Law and Public Safety of New Jersey, “the Immigrant Trust Directive makes that distinction clear. Under the Directive, New Jersey police officers cannot participate in federal immigration raids. They cannot stop, question, arrest, search, or detain an individual based solely on actual or suspected immigration status. And they cannot ask an individual’s immigration statute except in rare cases when it is relevant to a specific criminal investigation.” The presence of unidentified federal agents and unmarked cars has and will continue to exacerbate concerns and erode trust between federal law enforcement and the public as well as

¹ <https://planetprinceton.com/2024/07/10/ice-conducts-raids-in-princeton-everyone-is-terrified/>

make the work of local law enforcement more difficult due to increased confusion by residents as to which law enforcement entity they may be engaging with.

What took place on July 10th cultivated a culture of fear and distrust and must be corrected. ERO must make protocol clear and available to all in New Jersey while doing their part to build the trust needed in the community. As the Congressional representative of New Jersey's 12th District, I request answers to the following questions:

- What is the standard operating procedure for ICE when agents are dispatched into a community?
- What is the notification process prior to a raid and is there a chain of command on the ground that includes local, county, or state officials?
- Can you confirm that a warrant was issued and served in accordance with the law?
- Can you confirm that these agents were properly identifiable and following official protocols? If so, why are there reports that their presence caused confusion among residents as to what kind of "police" they were? If not, where was the point of failure?
- Are agents legally allowed to stop people on the street and ask them for identification?
- What happened to the individuals who were taken? Are they all considered arrested or detained? What are their official charges? Where are they being held? Have their families been informed?

I respectfully request answers to the above questions within the next 10 business days and to coordinate a follow-up meeting between our offices. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress