

U.S. House of Representatives
Rep. Sharice L. Davids
Kansas Third District

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Mr. Todd M. Lyons
Senior Official Performing the
Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs
Enforcement
500 12th St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Secretary Noem and Mr. Lyons,

I write to express deep concern and strong opposition to any plans to open and operate Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facilities in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Proposed facilities in Kansas City, Missouri, and Leavenworth, Kansas would undermine public safety, derail local economic development priorities, and divert critical resources away from local law enforcement and community-based public safety efforts.

Last month, ICE personnel toured a warehouse in south Kansas City and are reportedly in negotiations to purchase the facility to establish a 7,500-bed detention center. However, the facility was given tax exemptions by Port KC with the clear understanding that the site would be used for economic development and manufacturing growth. This apparent shift in use raises serious concerns that the building owner's actions are misleading and inconsistent with local intentions, paving the way for a large-scale prison tied to this administration's reckless immigration enforcement.¹

Additionally, last fall, private prison operator CoreCivic signed a \$60 million contract with ICE to house detainees at a facility in Leavenworth, Kansas.² While this matter faces pending action by the City of Leavenworth, CoreCivic's historic operation of this facility is troubling, including issues with staffing, humane conditions, lack of cooperation with local law enforcement, and more.³

¹ Josh Merchant, "Platform Ventures got Port KC tax incentives to build a warehouse. Now they're selling it to ICE," The Beacon, February 6, 2026, <https://thebeaconnews.org/stories/2026/02/06/platform-ventures-ice-detention-center-port-kc/>.

² Morgan Chilson, "CoreCivic inks new contract with ICE while awaiting legal decisions on Kansas prison," Kansas Reflector, September 30, 2025, <https://kansasreflector.com/2025/09/30/corecivic-inks-new-contract-with-ice-while-awaiting-legal-decisions-on-kansas-prison/>.

³ Matthew Kelly, "Kansas ICE prison one step closer to opening after 5-1 vote in Leavenworth," February 3, 2026, <https://www.kansascity.com/news/politics-government/article314549343.html>.

These efforts are compounded by masked, militarized federal agents roving our streets, detaining peaceful protesters, legal residents, and even American citizens without transparency, oversight, or accountability. Despite claiming to target violent criminals, this administration detained more than 29,000 people with no criminal convictions or pending charges last month⁴; estimates suggest that nearly 75 percent of current ICE detainees have no criminal convictions.⁵

Taken together, these actions — along with the rapid expansion of immigration detention facilities far beyond the border — are making communities less safe, diverting critical resources from local law enforcement, and undermining efforts to stop the flow of illicit drugs into the United States. These detention warehouses are also inhumane and would burden local infrastructure and medical and emergency services that are already stretched thin.

Thoughtful immigration enforcement is necessary. I will keep pressing my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to negotiate bipartisan immigration reforms that do not overwhelm our systems, provide a clear pathway to citizenship, and secure our border from violent crime and drug trafficking. However, your actions are undermining these efforts and leaving communities less safe.

Therefore, I ask that you respond to the following questions by February 27, 2026:

1. Is the administration currently negotiating or planning to negotiate the purchase, lease, sublease or other occupation of a future detention facility in south Kansas City, Missouri? If so, what is the maximum number of people you plan to detain there?
2. Does the administration plan to immediately house detainees at the CoreCivic facility in Leavenworth, Kansas pending municipal action? If so, what is the maximum number of people you plan to detain there?
3. If you proceed, can you guarantee that only people with a criminal conviction or who have been charged with a violent crime will be held at these facilities?
4. If you proceed, can you guarantee that no American citizens or legal residents will be detained at these facilities?
5. Have you coordinated with local law enforcement to ensure these facilities do not pose a public safety concern?
6. How much investment and resources are being taken from local law enforcement to pay for these mass detentions?

I strongly oppose the opening of any detention center in the Kansas City metro area and urge you to immediately reconsider these decisions. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

⁴ Robert Farley, “As ICE Arrests Increased, a Higher Portion Had No U.S. Criminal Record,” FactCheck.org, January 28, 2026, <https://www.factcheck.org/2026/01/as-ice-arrests-increased-a-higher-portion-had-no-u-s-criminal-record/>.

⁵ TRAC Immigration, <https://tracereports.org/immigration/quickfacts/#:~:text=Immigration%20and%20Customs%20Enforcement%20held,as%20of%20January%2025%2C%202026.&text=52%2C504%20out%20of%2070%2C766%E2%80%94or,as%20of%20January%2025%2C%202026.>