

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 31, 2014

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
House Subcommittee on
Homeland Security Appropriations
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on
Homeland Security Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Price,

We write to express our concern that the Department of Homeland Security's FY2015 Appropriations Bill might once again include a quota dictating how many immigrants U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement must hold on a daily basis. Often referred to as the detention bed mandate, this policy wastes taxpayer dollars by forcing ICE to forgo alternatives to detention that are far less costly and equally as effective.

We currently spend nearly \$2 billion a year, or \$5.4 million every day, on immigration detention. Each day, ICE is mandated to keep 34,000 detention beds full, which cost taxpayers approximately \$159 per day for each detainee. Proven alternatives to detention, including release on bond, supervised release, and community based programs, cost between 70 cents and \$17 a day, yet the immigration detention bed quota prevents ICE from using these alternatives, even in cases where release would be appropriate.

This arbitrary and costly detention bed mandate runs counter to the best practices of law enforcement. Indeed, no other law enforcement agency is subject to a quota dictated by Congress for the number of people it must keep in jail each day. Eliminating the mandate would bring ICE in line with the best practices of other law enforcement agencies that use detention beds based on actual need and the potential risks posed by individual detainees.

This year's appropriations process represents an opportunity for us to correct course and end an ineffective approach to law enforcement that runs counter to our values and wastes hard-earned taxpayer dollars. We respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for FY2015 exclude the ICE immigration detention bed quota.

Sincerely,

Bill Foster

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

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