

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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May 4, 2026

Commissioner Kevin J. Bethel
Police Commissioner
Philadelphia Police Department
400 N Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Commissioner Bethel:

The Committee on the Judiciary is conducting oversight of state and local jurisdictions that endanger American communities through their refusal to cooperate with federal immigration officials. The Philadelphia Police Department's (PPD) immigration-related policies prioritize criminal and illegal aliens over American citizens and threaten public safety. We write to request information about Philadelphia's sanctuary policies, including PPD's lack of cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to ensure that dangerous aliens are not released onto American streets.

To protect communities from criminal aliens in law enforcement custody, ICE uses detainers, which are simple requests that a law enforcement agency "notify [ICE] as early as possible before [the agency] release[s] a removable alien" and "[h]old the alien for up to 48 hours beyond the time [the agency] would ordinarily release them so [the Department of Homeland Security] has time to assume custody in accordance with federal immigration law."¹ Federal law prohibits jurisdictions from restricting ICE's requests for and receipt of individuals' citizenship information.² For years, Philadelphia has prohibited PPD's compliance with simple ICE detainers.³ Instead, PPD "will only comply with a federal detainer request if [i]t is supported by a judicial warrant *and* [p]ertains to an individual being released from custody after a conviction for a violent first or second-degree felony."⁴ PPD also restricts information sharing with ICE.⁵

Despite PPD's lack of cooperation with federal immigration officials, you also have

¹ U.S. Immigr. and Customs Enf't, *Immigr. Detainers* (May 13, 2025), <https://www.ice.gov/immigration-detainers>.

² See 8 U.S.C. § 1373.

³ PPD Policy Regarding Resident Citizenship Status, Citizens Police Oversight Commission, City of Philadelphia (May 20, 2024), <https://www.phila.gov/media/20240520141708/PPD-Policy-Regarding-Resident-Citizenship-Explainer.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

acknowledged increasing threats against federal law enforcement, noting that “ICE agents are coming under attack, and we are charged as law enforcement to protect *everyone*—citizens of Philadelphia and others.”⁶ That statement stands in stark contrast to anti-law enforcement statements from Philadelphia Sheriff Rochelle Bilal, who described ICE as “made-up, fake, wannabe law enforcement” who violate “not only legal law, but the moral law.”⁷

Philadelphia’s pro-illegal alien policies ensure dangerous criminals are free to reoffend in Philadelphia and beyond. Within the past year, ICE has arrested numerous criminal aliens who PPD released into the community despite ICE detainers. In July 2025, for example, ICE arrested an illegal alien from Brazil who PPD had arrested “for causing catastrophe, reckless endangerment[,] and fleeing police.”⁸ Despite the man’s criminal history and an active ICE detainer, PPD released him.⁹ This year alone, PPD has ignored detainers for an illegal alien from Guatemala with arrests for “agg[ravated] assault, strangulation, reckless endangering[, and] criminal mischief;¹⁰ a twice-deported illegal alien from Honduras with arrests for assault and stalking;¹¹ an illegal alien from the Dominican Republic with multiple drug-related arrests, including for possession with intent to distribute heroin and fentanyl;¹² and an illegal alien from the Dominican Republic with arrests for assault and reckless endangerment.¹³

Despite your claim that PPD is committed “to fight[ing] crime and the fear of crime,”¹⁴ Philadelphia’s sanctuary policies endanger the communities you serve. Like other sanctuary jurisdictions we have examined, the shielding of criminal aliens from immigration enforcement in Philadelphia undermines public safety and thwarts the efficient enforcement of federal law. Accordingly, to assist the Committee with its continued oversight of federal immigration policy and to inform potential legislative reforms to address sanctuary policies, we ask that you provide the following information:

1. All documents and communications referring or relating to PPD’s interaction with ICE for the period January 1, 2024, to the present;

⁶ Victor Fiorillo, *Philly’s Top Cop Talks Plummeting Homicides, Horrible Drivers, and ICE Raids*, PHILADELPHIA MAGAZINE (Dec. 4, 2025, 9:50 AM), <https://www.phillymag.com/news/2025/12/04/kevin-bethel-philadelphia-police-crime/>.

⁷ Melissa Hellmann, *‘You don’t want this smoke’: US sheriff reflects on her viral remarks about ICE*, THE GUARDIAN (Jan. 17, 2026, 12:00 PM), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jan/17/philadelphia-sheriff-viral-remarks-ice>.

⁸ ERO Philadelphia (@EROPhiladelphia), X (July 14, 2025, 6:46 PM), <https://x.com/EROPhiladelphia/status/1944891207693246765?s>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ ERO Philadelphia (@EROPhiladelphia), X (Feb. 26, 2026, 3:52 PM), <https://x.com/EROPhiladelphia/status/2027124520176267726?s>.

¹¹ ERO Philadelphia (@EROPhiladelphia), X (Mar. 12, 2026, 4:56 PM), <https://x.com/EROPhiladelphia/status/2032199015647838541?s>.

¹² ERO Philadelphia (@EROPhiladelphia), X (Apr. 17, 2026, 9:39 AM), <https://x.com/EROPhiladelphia/status/2045134936236249589?s>.

¹³ ERO Philadelphia (@EROPhiladelphia), X (Apr. 20, 2026, 11:54 AM), <https://x.com/EROPhiladelphia/status/2046256270529696062?s>.

¹⁴ See Core Values & Mission, Philadelphia Police Dep’t, <https://www.phillypolice.com/about/core-values/> (last accessed Apr. 21, 2026).


2. All documents and communications referring or relating to PPD's policies, practices, and procedures related to non-U.S. citizens for the period January 1, 2024, to the present;
3. The number of ICE detainees that PPD has declined to honor for the period January 1, 2024, to the present; and
4. All documents and communications between or among PPD, the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office, and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office referring or relating to immigration enforcement for the period January 1, 2024, to the present.

Please provide the information requested as soon as possible but no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 18, 2026. The Committee is authorized to conduct oversight of federal immigration law pursuant to the Rules of the House of Representatives.¹⁵ If you have any questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-6906. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jim Jordan
Chairman



Tom McClintock
Chairman
Subcommittee on Immigration
Integrity, Security, and Enforcement

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member
The Honorable Pramila Jayapal, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration
Integrity, Security, and Enforcement

¹⁵ Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, R. X (2025).