

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

January 5, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Madam Secretary:

We write regarding an audit report issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) that recommended DHS develop a more unified approach to immigration enforcement.<sup>1</sup> We appreciate your assistance in understanding DHS's efforts to improve unity of effort in immigration enforcement.

In its report, the OIG found that Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and United States Citizenship and Immigrant Services continue to struggle with collaboration and a unified approach to immigration enforcement. The OIG specifically identified difficulties with the agencies' evaluation of immigration outcomes, the affirmative asylum process, and cross-component coordination issues. The OIG also expressed concern that DHS lacks a specific department-level group to manage cross-component coordination of immigration enforcement within DHS.<sup>2</sup>

The OIG recommended that the Secretary establish a formal department-level group comprised of senior officials from each relevant component and key representatives from DHS leadership responsible for the enforcement and administration of immigration laws. The group would specify roles and responsibilities for immigration enforcement, facilitate better coordination and communication among components, ensure data collection and reporting for immigration activity among components, and mediate conflicts regarding immigration enforcement responsibilities among components.<sup>3</sup>

In concurring with OIG's recommendation, DHS described plans to develop an Immigration Policy Council (IPC). The IPC will facilitate department-wide strategic planning for immigration policy and enforcement, and provide a forum to communicate and collaborate between components that are responsible for immigration enforcement. DHS estimated that the

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, *DHS Needs a More Unified Approach to Immigration Enforcement and Administration* (OIG-18-07) (Oct. 30, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

IPC would be functional by March 31, 2018.<sup>4</sup> Given the threats facing the nation, we respectfully request that DHS make this recommendation a top priority for DHS.

DHS has made “unity of effort” a high priority by encouraging greater collaboration and coordination between components. In order to better understand DHS’s response to this OIG report and the formation of the IPC, we respectfully request that DHS arrange a staff-level briefing on the following topics no later than January 26, 2018:

1. Has a detailed plan for the IPC been developed at this time? If not, when do you anticipate a plan will be finalized?
2. Is March 31, 2018, still the estimated date by which the IPC will be functioning?
3. Are there other steps that the Department is taking to develop a more unified approach to immigration enforcement, in addition to the Immigration Policy Council? If so, please explain.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If you have any questions please contact Melissa Egred with the majority staff at (202) 224-4751 or [Melissa\\_Egred@hsgac.senate.gov](mailto:Melissa_Egred@hsgac.senate.gov) or Hannah Berner with the minority staff at (202) 224-5065 or [Hannah\\_Berner@hsgac.senate.gov](mailto:Hannah_Berner@hsgac.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson  
Chairman



Claire McCaskill  
Ranking Member

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.*