Ms. Danielle Brian  
Executive Director  
Project on Government Oversight  
1100 G Street, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Brian:

Thank you for your August 31, 2016 letter. Secretary Johnson asked that I respond on his behalf.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees are housed in a variety of facilities across the United States, including, but not limited to, ICE-owned Service Processing Centers (SPC) that are contractor operated; state, local, or county facilities contracted through Intergovernmental Service Agreements (IGSA); and contractor-owned and/or operated facilities under contract to ICE directly. ICE uses these various models to meet the agency’s detention needs, utilizing the taxpayer resources it has been appropriated for detention costs as efficiently as possible. Detention is a necessary tool that ICE uses to accomplish its public safety mission, including the detention of those who are priorities for removal, many of whom are convicted criminals or who otherwise pose a risk to public safety.

ICE remains committed to providing a safe and humane environment for all individuals in its custody. To this end, all facilities housing ICE detainees undergo inspections to ensure that they meet applicable ICE detention standards with respect to medical care, access to legal resources, food service, telephone access, visitation, recreation, and numerous other aspects of detention. ICE has on-site staff at all SPCs, contract detention facilities, and dedicated IGSA facilities, as well as at many non-dedicated facilities, to resolve day-to-day detainee concerns and to ensure facilities are meeting the ICE detention standards and other policy requirements.

Besides ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations’ own inspections program and on-site detention monitoring program, many other entities, such as the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility and the Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, review and report on ICE detention facilities. In addition, all detainees have telephone access to a pro-bono platform, where they may contact local consulates, access legal aid associations like the American Bar Association, report allegations of abuse to the Office of Inspector General or the ICE Joint Intake Center, and contact a variety of non-governmental organizations. Detainees also have toll-free access to ICE’s Detention Reporting and Information Line, which provides individuals in custody and agency stakeholders the opportunity to communicate with live operators about detainee concerns, allegations of abuse or misconduct, and facility conditions. Such oversight helps ensure that ICE will continue to carry out its

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mission safely, responsibly, and with integrity, while ensuring the care and well-being of all individuals in its custody.

Further, on August 29, 2016, Secretary Johnson announced that he had directed a subcommittee of the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) to focus on privatized immigration facilities. The Secretary asked the Subcommittee to focus its review on the current policy and practice concerning the use of private immigration detention, taking into account fiscal considerations, and to evaluate whether ICE should reduce, and ultimately end, its use of private detention facilities. The HSAC subcommittee will provide the Secretary with a written report no later than November 30, 2016.

Thank you again for your letter and your interest in this important issue.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Sarah R. Saldaña
Director