

May 27, 2026

David Venturella  
Acting Director-Designate  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th St. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Mr. Venturella:

I write with questions about your appointment to serve as the Acting Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the extent to which it raises fresh concerns about the abuse of the revolving door and the cloud of corruption that surrounds ICE and the entire Trump Administration.<sup>1</sup> You worked at the GEO Group, the largest private prison contractor operating immigrant detention facilities across the U.S., for over a decade prior to joining ICE; that history, and your reported use of DHS personnel and resources for personal or political favors, raise serious concerns about your ability to effectively serve as ICE's leader, especially at a time when the Trump Administration's mass deportation agenda is systematically violating fundamental human rights.

Your career can be characterized as a continuous, decades-long trip in and out of the revolving door between ICE and the private prison industry.<sup>2</sup> Your first stint at ICE was 22 years long, where you served in various leadership positions overseeing detention policy and contracts, including serving as Director for the Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations for ICE from February 2011 to June 2012.<sup>3</sup> After leaving ICE, you spent over a decade, between 2012 through 2023, climbing the ranks as a high-ranking executive at GEO Group and managing the company's federal contracts for immigration and detention facilities.<sup>4</sup> Before returning to ICE in February

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<sup>1</sup> New York Times, "Trump Administration to Tap Longtime ICE Official to Lead Agency," Hamed Aleaziz and Tyler Pager, May 12, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/12/us/politics/ice-david-venturella-trump.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren and Ranking Member Raskin to DHS IG Joseph Cuffari and Acting DoD IG Steven Stebbins, December 8, 2025, [https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/immigration\\_contractor\\_corruption\\_letter.pdf](https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/immigration_contractor_corruption_letter.pdf); Letter from Members of Congress Elizabeth Warren, Pramila Jayapal, Ayanna Pressley, et al. to Acting Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement Matthew Albence and Director of Federal Bureau of Prisons Kathleen Hawk Sawyer, January 16, 2020, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/oversight/reports/warren-leads-colleagues-investigating-the-revolving-door-between-federal-agencies-and-the-private-detention-industry>.

<sup>3</sup> ExecAtlas, "David J. Venturella," <https://people.equilar.com/bio/person/david-venturella-the-geo-group-inc/13670043>.

<sup>4</sup> Open Secrets, "David Venturella," <https://www.opensecrets.org/revolving-door/david-venturella/summary?id=78082>; Federal News Network, "Former private prison executive David Venturella will become ICE's acting leader," The Associated Press, May 13, 2026,

2025, you continued serving GEO Group as a paid consultant through January 31, 2025.<sup>5</sup> During your tenure, GEO Group became one of ICE’s largest and most profitable contractors, operating detention centers across the country. Advocates have said that “If there was ever a classic example of the revolving door phenomena, it’s David Venturella,” as you have cycled from high-ranking positions at ICE directly into and out of a corporation profiting from mass detention and deportation.<sup>6</sup>

GEO Group has already earned immense profit from the Trump Administration’s immigration agenda. The company reportedly houses roughly one-third of all ICE detainees and has secured massive new contracts as the Administration ramps up its unprecedented detention expansion.<sup>7</sup> According to GEO Group CEO George Zoley on a May 6, 2026 earnings call, “Last year was the most successful period for new business wins in our company’s history, and we expect 2026 to be a very active year as well.”<sup>8</sup> The company has been actively scaling up to capitalize on President Trump’s immigration agenda, expanding its available bed space from 15,000 to 32,000 and aggressively pursuing contracts to meet its new capacity.<sup>9</sup> For example, to secure a 15-year contract for 1,000 beds in Newark, New Jersey, GEO Group sued the state over its state law that bars private and public companies from contracting with ICE to detain immigrants.<sup>10</sup> In total, last year, ICE contracts drove a year in which GEO made “up to approximately \$520 million in new incremental annual revenues...the largest amount of new business.”<sup>11</sup>

GEO Group’s rapid expansion has coincided with the Trump Administration’s persistent revolving door and corruption concerns. Numerous high-profile U.S. officials formerly worked for GEO Group. For example, Border Czar Tom Homan, whose office reportedly played a role in your hiring at ICE,<sup>12</sup> worked as a paid consultant for GEO Group and has seemingly failed to honor his promise to recuse himself from contracting decisions—with his former colleagues reportedly “trading on Tom Homan.”<sup>13</sup> Mr. Homan reportedly accepted \$50,000 cash in a bag in exchange

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<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/people/2026/05/former-private-prison-executive-david-venturella-will-become-ices-acting-leader/>.

<sup>5</sup> GEO Group, Form 8-K, January 31, 2023, p. 2, <https://investors.geogroup.com/static-files/15aea0e3-2f9c-41ec-9b7a-81012810d81d>.

<sup>6</sup> Mother Jones, “Trump Taps Former Private Prison Exec to Run ICE,” Sophie Hurwitz, May 14, 2026, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2026/05/ice-dhs-david-venturella-geo-group-private-prisons/>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. News, “Former Private Prison Executive David Venturella Will Become ICE’s Acting Leader,” Associated Press, May 13, 2026, <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2026-05-13/former-private-prison-executive-david-venturella-will-become-ices-acting-leader>.

<sup>8</sup> Mother Jones, “Trump Taps Former Private Prison Exec to Run ICE,” Sophie Hurwitz, May 14, 2026, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2026/05/ice-dhs-david-venturella-geo-group-private-prisons/>.

<sup>9</sup> Nevada Current, “Private prison giant sees \$1B ICE contract as start of ‘unprecedented opportunities’ under Trump,” Ariana Figuero, February 27, 2025, <https://nevadacurrent.com/2025/02/27/repub/private-prison-giant-sees-1b-ice-contract-as-start-of-unprecedented-opportunities-under-trump/>.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Mother Jones, “Trump Taps Former Private Prison Exec to Run ICE,” Sophie Hurwitz, May 14, 2026, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2026/05/ice-dhs-david-venturella-geo-group-private-prisons/>.

<sup>12</sup> Washington Post, “The former private prison exec behind ICE’s immigrant detention surge,” Douglas MacMillan and Aaron Schaffer, August 1, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/08/01/ice-david-venturella-geo-immigration-detention/>.

<sup>13</sup> ProPublica, Trading on Tom Homan: Inside the Push to Cash in on the Trump Administration’s Deportation Campaign,” Avi Asher-Schapiro, Jeff Ernsthansen, and Mica Rosenberg, October, 1, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/tom-homan-border-czar-trump-mark-hall-charles-sowell>; Washington Post,

for a promise for future immigration-related contracts, and has called for expanding ICE’s detention capacity to “at least 100,000 beds.”<sup>14</sup> Former Attorney General Pam Bondi worked as a lobbyist for GEO Group, and at least six former ICE officials who left government over the past decade ended up working at GEO Group.<sup>15</sup>

On May 12, 2026, President Trump named you as Acting Director of ICE.<sup>16</sup> Your promotion at ICE to oversee immigration detention centers—after being paid \$6 million by GEO Group to run those very centers as a GEO employee<sup>17</sup>—immediately sparked revolving door corruption concerns.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, you may have already acted in your role at ICE in ways that directly benefit your previous employer. According to public reporting, you were hired as a senior ICE adviser in February 2025, less than two weeks after concluding your consulting work for GEO Group.<sup>19</sup> Federal ethics laws prohibit executive branch employees from participating in official matters in which they or their recent employers have a financial interest, including by imposing a “cooling off period” in which government employees are generally barred from working on contracts awarded to their former employers for one year.<sup>20</sup> But you reportedly received a waiver to allow you to work on matters involving GEO Group.<sup>21</sup> Since your return to ICE in February 2025, GEO Group has reportedly received hundreds of millions of dollars in new or expanded federal contracts tied to the Administration’s detention expansion efforts.<sup>22</sup> Reports specifically allege you

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“Trump’s border czar earned consulting fees from immigrant detention firm,” Douglas MacMillan and Aaron Schaffer, May 27, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/05/27/border-czar-ethics-consulting-fees/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> Mother Jones, “Trump Taps Former Private Prison Exec to Run ICE,” Sophie Hurwitz, May 14, 2026, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2026/05/ice-dhs-david-venturella-geo-group-private-prisons/>.

<sup>16</sup> New York Times, “Trump Administration to Tap Longtime ICE Official to Lead Agency,” Hamed Aleaziz and Tyler Pager, May 12, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/12/us/politics/ice-david-venturella-trump.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Washington Post, “The former private prison exec behind ICE’s immigrant detention surge,” August 1, 2025, Douglas MacMillan and Aaron Schaffer, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/08/01/ice-david-venturella-geo-immigration-detention/>.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from Ranking Members Raskin, Jayapal, and Crockett to DHS border czar Tom Homan, August 25, 2025, [https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-08-25.raskin-jayapal-crockett-to-homan-dhs-re-geo-group\\_0.pdf](https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/democrats-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-08-25.raskin-jayapal-crockett-to-homan-dhs-re-geo-group_0.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Washington Post, “The former private prison exec behind ICE’s immigrant detention surge,” August 1, 2025, Douglas MacMillan and Aaron Schaffer, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/08/01/ice-david-venturella-geo-immigration-detention/>.

<sup>20</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 208; Washington Post, “The former private prison exec behind ICE’s immigrant detention surge,” August 1, 2025, Douglas MacMillan and Aaron Schaffer, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/08/01/ice-david-venturella-geo-immigration-detention/>.

<sup>21</sup> Project on Government Oversight, “Private Prison Giant Hired ICE Detention Chief,” Nick Schwellenbach and Rene Klaczyk, January 17, 2025, <https://www.pogo.org/investigations/private-prison-giant-hired-ice-detention-chief/>; Washington Post, “The former private prison exec behind ICE’s immigrant detention surge,” Douglas MacMillan and Aaron Schaffer, August 1, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/08/01/ice-david-venturella-geo-immigration-detention/>.

<sup>22</sup> GEO Group, “The GEO Group Reports Third Quarter 2025 Results and Increases Share Repurchase Authorization to \$500 Million,” November 6, 2025, <https://investors.geogroup.com/news-releases/news-release-details/geo-group-reports-third-quarter-2025-results-and-increases-share>; GEO Group, “The GEO Group Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2025 Results,” February 12, 2026, <https://investors.geogroup.com/news-releases/news-release-details/geo-group-reports-fourth-quarter-and-full-year-2025-results>; GEO Group, “The GEO Group Reports First Quarter Results and Increases Full Year 2026 Guidance,” May 6, 2026, <https://investors.geogroup.com/news-releases/news-release-details/geo-group-reports-first-quarter-results-and-increases-full-year>.

have been involved in and personally reviewed planning documents for President Trump's plan to use detention centers to detain individuals in ICE custody,<sup>23</sup> even though your previous employer competed for those very lucrative warehouse contracts.<sup>24</sup> These ethics concerns regarding your actions at ICE have new salience now that you have been appointed to an even more influential and powerful position as ICE's new acting director, and your failure to release any ethics agreements or financial disclosures has darkened the cloud surrounding your leadership.

I am also concerned by other reports of your behavior. You allegedly called ICE officials in Miami for a personal or political favor: to detain a Brazilian woman before she was able to post bail. That woman was the ex-wife of Paolo Zampolli, a longtime Trump associate and ally who was embroiled in a custody battle.<sup>25</sup> If true, these allegations would be an inappropriate and extraordinary abuse of power. They raise profound concerns about your professional judgement and your willingness to weaponize federal immigration enforcement to assist politically connected allies of the President.

Your appointment comes at a time when ICE is already facing intense scrutiny over deaths in detention,<sup>26</sup> due process violations,<sup>27</sup> aggressive and indiscriminate ICE raids targeting families and children,<sup>28</sup> and the rapid expansion of privately operated detention infrastructure,<sup>29</sup> including

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<sup>23</sup> Business Insider, "ICE just ordered \$30 million worth of new technology from Palantir to track immigrants," Rosemarie Ho, April 17, 2025, <https://www.businessinsider.com/ice-palantir-new-technology-30-million-visa-overstays-self-deportation-2025-4>; Politico, "Trump administration elevates former private prison company exec to lead ICE," Aaron Pellish, May 12, 2026, <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/05/12/venturella-ice-trump-00918125>; Wall Street Journal, "Trump to Name Former Private Prison Official as Acting ICE Leader," Michelle Hackman and Marianne LeVine, May 12, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/politics/policy/trump-to-name-former-private-prison-official-as-acting-ice-leader-5af5d649>.

<sup>24</sup> Project on Government Oversight, "Stephen Miller's Financial Stake in ICE Contractor Palantir," Nick Schwellenbach, June 24, 2025, <https://www.pogo.org/investigations/stephen-miller-conflicts-of-interest>; Wired, "ICE Is Paying Palantir \$30 Million to Build 'ImmigrationOS' Surveillance Platform," Caroline Haskins, April 18, 2025, <https://www.wired.com/story/ice-palantir-immigrationos/>; NPR, "Former private prison official to serve as acting ICE chief," Ximena Bustillo, May 12, 2026, <https://www.npr.org/2026/05/12/g-s1-121766/ice-acting-director-venturella>; Project Salt Box, "ICE Gains Fast-Track Access to Private Prison Giant as It Plans to Nearly Double Detention Capacity," Michael Wrinston, February 14, 2026, <https://www.projectsaltbox.com/p/ice-gains-fast-track-access-to-private>.

<sup>25</sup> New York Times, "Trump Administration to Tap Longtime ICE Official to Lead Agency," Hamed Aleaziz and Tyler Pager, May 12, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/12/us/politics/ice-david-venturella-trump.html>; Yahoo News, "One of Trump's Friends Reportedly Asked ICE to Arrest the Mother of His Child in Custody Battle Gambit," Isaac Schorr, March 20, 2026, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/articles/one-trump-friends-reportedly-asked-162456976.html>.

<sup>26</sup> KFF, "Deaths and Health Care Issues in ICE Detention Centers Under the Second Trump Administration," Akash Pillai, Drishti Pillai, and Samantha Artiga, March 25, 2026, <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/deaths-and-health-care-issues-in-ice-detention-centers-under-the-second-trump-administration/>.

<sup>27</sup> National Immigration Law Center, "ICE is detaining indiscriminately. And releasing almost no one," Heidi Altman, October 21, 2025, <https://www.nilc.org/articles/ice-is-detaining-indiscriminately-and-releasing-almost-no-one/>.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from Senator Warren to Health and Human Services Secretary Kennedy, February 4, 2026, [https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren\\_lawmakers\\_letter\\_to\\_hhs\\_on\\_ice\\_traumatizing\\_children.pdf](https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_lawmakers_letter_to_hhs_on_ice_traumatizing_children.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> American Immigration Council, "New Report Details ICE's Expanding and Increasingly Unaccountable Detention System," January 23, 2026, Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/ice-expanding-detention-system/>.

by aggressively converting warehouses built for Amazon packages to detention facilities.<sup>30</sup> Communities across the country are increasingly alarmed that the Trump Administration is building a deportation machine designed not only to terrorize immigrant families, but also to enrich a small network of politically connected contractors and former officials.<sup>31</sup> Your long-standing ties to GEO Group and the resulting ethics concerns surrounding your appointment only deepen those fears.

Americans should not have to wonder whether ICE enforcement priorities are being driven by the financial interests of politically connected detention contractors. Given your track record and previous employment at GEO Group, I request that you recuse yourself from all matters that could directly or indirectly benefit GEO Group, including through the award, writing, and execution of federal contracts. Additionally, I request that you make your ethics disclosures, waiver agreements, recusals, and all related ethics guidance public.

I further request answers to the following questions by no later than June 10, 2026:

1. As ICE's new Acting Director, will you recuse yourself from all matters that could directly or indirectly benefit GEO Group, including through the award, writing, and execution of federal contracts?
2. Please provide all ethics waivers, recusals, and guidance you have received related to your prior employment or consulting work with GEO Group.
3. Please identify every ICE or DHS matter involving GEO Group in which you have participated since joining the Administration as a Senior ICE Advisor.
4. Please provide a complete account of all communications you have had with GEO Group executives, lobbyists, or representatives since joining the Administration as a Senior ICE Advisor.
5. Please explain the circumstances surrounding reports that you contacted ICE officials in Miami regarding the detention of the ex-wife of a Trump ally.
  - a. Did you contact ICE officials regarding the detention of a Brazilian woman tied to Paolo Zampolli? Please provide all correspondence you had with DHS regarding this matter.
6. Please detail any and all steps you have taken to avoid conflicts of interest related to your prior employment with GEO Group.

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<sup>30</sup> Washington Post, "ICE documents reveal plan to hold 80,000 immigrants in warehouses," December 24, 2025, Douglas MacMillan and Jonathan O'Connell, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/12/24/ice-immigrants-detention-warehouses-deportation-trump/>.

<sup>31</sup> Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, "Warren Leads Colleagues Investigating the Revolving Door Between Federal Agencies and the Private Detention Industry," press release, January 17, 2020, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/oversight/reports/warren-leads-colleagues-investigating-the-revolving-door-between-federal-agencies-and-the-private-detention-industry>; Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, "Trump's budget bill benefits private immigration detention companies that donated to Trump," Katherine Culliton-Gonzalez and Lama Elsharif, July 23, 2025, <https://www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/crew-investigations/trumps-budget-bill-benefits-private-immigration-detention-companies-that-donated-to-trump/>; American Immigration Council, "Trump's Mass Deportation Agenda Makes Everyone Less Safe — Including Immigration Agents," Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, October 17, 2025, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/trump-mass-deportation-agenda-makes-everyone-less-safe-including-immigration-agents/>.

7. Please identify any role you played in the review, development, recommendation, or approval of ICE detention expansion plans involving warehouses or other nontraditional detention facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Warren", written over a horizontal line.

Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator