

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 11, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

We write to share our alarm over the completely unacceptable treatment of U.S.-born citizens of federally recognized Tribes, who have been stopped and questioned by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on suspicion of being undocumented. In February, several Senators wrote to you following reports of ICE agents improperly stopping or detaining Tribal citizens. In June, you replied with a letter in which you failed to respond to the majority of the questions raised in the letter. Over the past month, we have heard additional alarming reports of ICE improperly stopping or detaining Tribal citizens for no apparent reason aside from their physical appearance. The disrespect and harassment of U.S.-born Tribal citizens by ICE is outrageous and inexcusable, and we request that you take immediate steps to put an end to it.

In one recent incident, several Tribal citizens were stopped by ICE agents at a bus stop in Redmond, Washington. These agents reportedly questioned the validity of their Tribal ID, with agents allegedly telling one Tribal citizen that her Tribal ID was “fake” and that “anyone can make that.” ICE agents also reportedly refused an offer to contact her Tribal government to verify these individuals’ enrollment and identification documents.

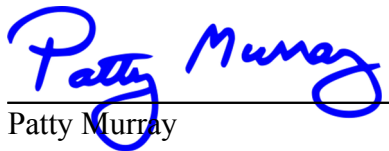
In our February letter, you were asked to supply information about the training offered to ICE agents about different forms of valid identification and documentation of United States citizenship for enrolled members of federally recognized Tribes. In response, you wrote, “The ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Academy does not train ERO officers to require any specific document to prove U.S. citizenship.” The experience of these Tribal citizens in Washington suggests that this is false: ICE agents are demanding certain documents to prove citizenship and are unaware of different forms of Tribal ID.

You have an obligation to uphold the federal government’s trust and treaty obligations to Tribes and to treat Tribal citizens with respect—this is not optional. In light of recent incidents, we urge you to develop policy and trainings to ensure that all ICE agents are trained to recognize Tribal IDs, regardless of whether they are working on Tribal lands. Additionally, we request that you answer the following questions:

1. What steps, if any, has your Department taken to develop new or change existing policies regarding its interactions with Tribal citizens and governments this year?
2. Please provide a detailed description of how agents are trained to respond when presented with a Tribally-issued identification card or document.
3. Does the Department require additional resources to develop training and policies for ICE agents to recognize identification documents issued by Tribal governments?
4. Please provide a detailed description of how the Department is working with its Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to review and investigate any allegations of civil rights and civil liberties violations as it pertains to ICE's treatment of United States-born citizens of federally recognized Tribes.
5. In both your June letter and in the Department's public response to the Redmond incident, your Department has denied that it racially profiles Tribal members. How do explain the pattern of ICE agents stopping and detaining Tribal citizens under the current Administration?

We appreciate your attention to this request and ask that you respond to these questions no later than January 11, 2026.

Sincerely,



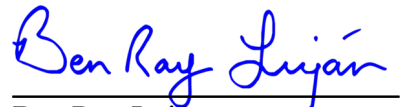
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



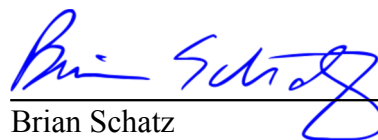
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United States Senator



Tina Smith
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