

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

April 22, 2026

Orice Williams Brown  
Acting Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Acting Comptroller General Williams Brown:

In recent months, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has launched an unprecedented effort to re-review approved benefit requests for individuals who are lawfully in the United States, including naturalized U.S. citizens. We are concerned that these re-reviews are a pretext for targeting immigrants and naturalized U.S. citizens for unwarranted scrutiny and selective enforcement, rather than a legitimate exercise in reducing fraud or improving vetting in our immigration system that is based on articulable, specific indicia that merits re-review.

In November 2025, USCIS announced that it would re-review all refugees who were admitted to the United States during the previous administration.<sup>1</sup> In January 2026, USCIS announced that it would conduct a comprehensive re-review of an approved benefit request for any individual who was born in or is a national of one of 39 countries or the Palestinian territories and received an approval on or after January 20, 2021.<sup>2</sup> USCIS's guidance states that the agency may extend the re-review to individuals who entered the United States outside of this timeframe. USCIS recently claimed, without any supporting evidence, that, "Many applicants for naturalization and lawful permanent residence were not sufficiently vetted. As a result, applications were approved and individuals were naturalized who should not have been."<sup>3</sup> This announcement did not list any specific failures in vetting, nor what next steps the agency plans to take with respect to approved lawful permanent residents and naturalized U.S. citizens.

Further, a February 2026 memorandum revealed that USCIS and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are authorized to arrest, detain, and reinterview refugees who have lived in the United States for at least one year and have not yet acquired lawful permanent resident status.<sup>4</sup> USCIS had already implemented this practice in January 2026 through Operation Post-Admission Refugee Reverification and Integrity Strengthening (PARRIS) in Minnesota, focusing

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<sup>1</sup> Ted Hesson and Kristina Cooke, *Trump administration orders review of Biden-era refugees, memo shows*, Reuters (Nov. 24, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-administration-orders-review-biden-era-refugees-memo-shows-2025-11-24/>.

<sup>2</sup> USCIS Policy Memorandum, *Hold and Review of USCIS Benefit Applications Filed by Aliens from Additional High-Risk Countries*, PM-602-0194 (Jan. 1, 2026), <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-alerts/PM-602-0194-PendingApplicationsAdditionalHighRiskCountries-20260101.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> USCIS, *Update on USCIS' Strengthened Screening and Vetting* (Mar. 30, 2026), <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/update-on-uscis-strengthened-screening-and-vetting>.

on Minnesota's 5,600 refugees who had not yet received lawful permanent resident status.<sup>5</sup> USCIS recently announced that the agency had lifted holds on individuals subject to Operation PARRIS.<sup>6</sup> However, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller has reportedly handpicked lawyers to review re-interviews conducted pursuant to Operation PARRIS because "too many people were being reaffirmed as refugees."<sup>7</sup>

To provide clarity to immigrants, American families, and the American public regarding these re-reviews, we request that the Government Accountability Office examine the following:

1. What does USCIS data indicate about the number and characteristics of individuals who have been re-reviewed and the results of those reviews? Please disaggregate available data by national origin and citizenship, form type, filing date, and the total number of derivative beneficiaries.
2. What does USCIS and ICE data indicate about the number and characteristics of refugees who were detained for re-vetting, their average time-in-custody, and the results of the vetting? Please disaggregate available data by national origin and citizenship, form type, filing date, total number of principal applicants and total number of derivative beneficiaries.
3. To what extent has USCIS developed and implemented policies and procedures for conducting re-reviews of approved benefits? When were those policies and procedures developed? To what extent have USCIS and ICE developed and implemented policies and procedures for determining when an admitted refugee should be arrested and detained for re-vetting?
  - When were those policies developed?
  - What are the policies and procedures, and if any, timetable, and plan for implementation for such re-reviews?
  - What training was provided to the officials who conducted the re-reviews? Which officials conducted the re-reviews and how were the officials selected?

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Memorandum for USCIS and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), *Detention of Refugees Who Have Failed to Adjust to Lawful Permanent Resident Status* (Feb. 18, 2026), <https://refugeerights.org/news-resources/lkt-in-newly-released-memo-dhs-claims-authority-to-detain-any-refugee-who-has-not-applied-for-a-green-card-after-a-year>.

<sup>5</sup> USCIS, *DHS Launches Landmark USCIS Fraud Investigation in Minnesota* (Jan. 9, 2026), <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/dhs-launches-landmark-uscis-fraud-investigation-in-minnesota>. See also, International Refugee Assistance Project, *U.H.A. v. Bondi: Challenging the Trump Administration's detention of refugees in Minnesota*, <https://refugeerights.org/news-resources/u-h-a-v-bondi-challenging-the-trump-administrations-detention-of-refugees-in-minnesota>.

<sup>6</sup> USCIS, *Update on USCIS' Strengthened Screening and Vetting* (Mar. 30, 2026), <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/update-on-uscis-strengthened-screening-and-vetting>

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Blitzer, "DHS has been conducting new interviews with refugees who were already vetted & admitted into the US. According to a former USCIS source with knowledge, Stephen Miller handpicked lawyers to review the re-interviews because 'too many people were being reaffirmed as refugees.'" X, (Mar. 19, 2026), <https://x.com/JonathanBlitzer/status/2034739603152814390>.

- How many officers have been assigned to conduct re-reviews? How many have been routed away from other units to conduct re-reviews? What does the data indicate about the costs of these assignments and the impacts of these assignments on processing and vetting benefits requests in the current backlog?
  - Does data indicate that the re-reviews yielded different results from the initial approvals?
  - How did USCIS define and operationalize “risk” for purposes of selecting cases for re-review? Were criteria uniform, or did they vary by benefit type, nationality, filing type, or time period?
4. What evidence did USCIS consider to determine that re-reviews were necessary and to what extent did USCIS analyze potential national security, public safety, overstay, and fraud concerns prior to implementing these processes?
    - What specific events, intelligence, audits, litigation outcomes, or internal findings prompted USCIS to initiate re-reviews of previously adjudicated cases?
  5. Were the triggers for re-reviews internal (e.g., USCIS Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate (FDNS) findings, component/directorate referrals) or external (e.g., White House, DHS, congressional inquiries)?
  6. Did USCIS consider alternative responses short of reopening or re-reviewing previously-approved cases (e.g., prospective policy changes, targeted referrals, enhanced post-adjudication monitoring)? If so, why were those alternatives rejected?
  7. What Artificial Intelligence (AI) or other electronic tools has USCIS used to identify cases for reinterview? What parameters (e.g., national origin, filing date, etc.) were used when deploying AI or other electronic tools? Which USCIS systems were these tools used in?
  8. What was the efficacy of the policies and procedures for re-interviews of approved refugees in determining eligibility for admission as an immigrant as set forth in 8 U.S.C. 1159(a)(1) (section 209(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act)?
  9. How much did re-reviews, including the detention of refugees, cost? Did USCIS and ICE consider alternative responses short of detaining individuals during re-review? Did the detention of noncitizens during refugee re-interviews change outcomes?
  10. What individual notice, if any, is provided to applicants subject to re-reviews and re-vetting and at which points in the process? What, if any, opportunities will individuals subject to re-review have to respond prior to any adverse determination?
  11. With respect to the determination by USCIS that prior screening and vetting measures were wholly inadequate, and that many lawful permanent residents and naturalization applicants were not sufficiently vetted, what criteria and evidence were used to make this

determination? What is the USCIS plan to ensure these individuals are sufficiently vetted?

12. To what extent have USCIS and ICE developed and implemented policies and procedures for initiating removal proceedings or expedited removal for refugees and other noncitizens lawfully present in the United States?
13. What does USCIS and ICE data indicate with respect to the number and characteristics, including national origin, of individuals subject to re-vetting against whom removal proceedings have been initiated? What does this data indicate regarding the number and characteristics, including date of entry, basis for entry into the United States, and immigration status, of individuals subject to re-vetting placed in expedited removal?
14. What does USCIS, ICE and Department of Justice data indicate with respect to the number and characteristics of individuals who have been removed from the United States subject to re-review processes, including date of entry, basis for entry into the United States, immigration status prior to removal, and where such individuals were removed?
15. What does the USCIS and Department of Justice data indicate about the number and characteristics, including national origin, of individuals subject to re-vetting against whom denaturalization proceedings have been initiated?

We look forward to working with you on this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin  
Ranking Member



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
Ranking Member, Judiciary  
Subcommittee on Border  
Security and Immigration



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Peter Welch  
United States Senator



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Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator