

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 16, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

I write to express my grave concern about the treatment of journalists during recent immigration enforcement actions in the Chicago area, including at the ICE processing center in Broadview, Illinois. A free and independent press is essential to public accountability and the rule of law. Federal actions that chill newsgathering—through force, intimidation, or secrecy—have no place in a democracy.

In recent days, the crisis has deepened. As federal court proceedings unfold over the legality of President Trump’s deployment of National Guard troops into Illinois, National Guard personnel have been observed on the ground near the Broadview ICE facility. These events are now the subject of active litigation before U.S. District Judge April Perry, who questioned whether federal agencies themselves provoked unrest and noted that the Broadview facility had been the site of “nothing but peaceful prayer vigils for 19 years, until CBP showed up—and then suddenly things take a turn for the worse¹.”

Multiple, well-documented incidents indicate a troubling pattern. In Broadview, clearly identified journalists report being shot with pepper balls, exposed to tear gas, and, in at least one case, arrested while reporting². In a separate incident now under local investigation, a CBS Chicago reporter’s vehicle was allegedly struck by a pepper-ball round outside the Broadview facility, dispersing chemical agents into the cabin³. Civil-society organizations and local press groups have since sought emergency relief and court protection for journalists covering these events⁴.

The complaint filed in *Chicago Headline Club v. Noem* further documents that federal agents—often masked and operating in combat gear—used tear gas, flash grenades, and rubber bullets against journalists who were clearly identified as members of the press⁵. Reporters including Raven Geary, Charles Thrush, and Stephen Held were each allegedly targeted and struck while complying with police instructions⁶. Such conduct raises serious constitutional concerns and demands accountability from DHS leadership.

¹ [Chicago Sun-Times — Judge could rule on National Guard deployment in Illinois on Thursday: Live updates](#) (Oct. 9, 2025).

² [U.S. Press Freedom Tracker — Journalist Steve Held arrested while covering Broadview ICE protest](#) (Sept. 27, 2025).

³ [CBS News Chicago — Criminal investigation launched after feds fire pepper ball at CBS Chicago reporter’s truck](#) (Sept. 28, 2025).

⁴ [ACLU of Illinois — Protesters and Members of the Press Challenge First Amendment Violations by Federal Forces at ICE Facility in Broadview, Illinois](#) (Oct. 6, 2025).

⁵ [Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press](#) (letter to DHS, Oct. 3, 2025).

⁶ [Chicago Headline Club — Judge to Grant Temporary Restraining Order Protecting Northern Illinois Journalists from Federal Agents](#) (Oct. 8, 2025).

Reports now indicate that hundreds of federal National Guard troops have been mobilized in and around the Chicago area under an asserted authority to “protect” federal agents from protesters. The Department of Justice has argued that the President’s deployment is “unreviewable,” while the State of Illinois has characterized it as an “illegal and lawless” encroachment on state sovereignty. These developments underscore the urgent need for DHS to reaffirm its obligation to uphold—not suppress—the First Amendment rights of journalists and peaceful assembly⁷.

To uphold the First Amendment, ensure transparency, and protect public trust, I request written answers to the following by October 30, 2025:

- 1) What current DHS, ICE, and CBP policies govern interactions with journalists at enforcement operations and protest sites, including guidance on the right to record? Please provide the policies and training materials.
- 2) How were those policies developed?
- 3) Will DHS adopt an explicit arrest-avoidance policy for journalists so that any detention or obstruction charges involving credentialed press trigger immediate supervisory review and rapid release?
- 4) What directives ensure federal agents at protest or crowd-control scenes display visible identification and agency affiliation? Please explain how DHS is complying with identification norms and legal requirements when responding to civil disturbances⁸.
- 5) Under what circumstances, if any, are plainclothes or masked personnel permitted to engage with press at close range, and what safeguards prevent confusion and unnecessary force?
- 6) Please produce any operational plans, directives, or field guidance for Operation Midway Blitz concerning press access, media safety zones, and use-of-force thresholds around the Broadview facility and other Chicago-area locations.
- 7) What coordination occurred with state and local authorities regarding “First Amendment zones,” media staging areas, or dispersal orders that affected journalists?
- 8) Please describe any coordination between DHS and federalized National Guard units in Illinois regarding media access, perimeter security, or use-of-force authority near ICE facilities.
- 9) What steps has DHS taken to investigate the Sept. 28–29 Broadview incidents involving a CBS Chicago reporter and to preserve and produce all relevant video, radio traffic, and officer statements⁹?
- 10) Please provide incident-level data since September 1, 2025 for DHS components operating in the Chicago area:
 - a) uses of force involving journalists;
 - b) detentions or arrests of journalists;
 - c) complaints alleging interference with newsgathering; and
 - d) resulting disciplinary actions.
- 11) What are DHS’s standards for press access at or near processing centers and during neighborhood operations (e.g., visibility lines, safe-stand areas, credential recognition, pool coverage)?
- 12) Will DHS commit to regular media briefings during heightened operations; designate a single on-scene POC for credential issues; and publish after-action summaries for any event where crowd-control munitions are deployed?

⁷ Chicago Sun-Times — *Judge could rule on National Guard deployment in Illinois on Thursday: Live updates* (Oct. 9, 2025).

⁸ 10 U.S.C. § 723 (requirement for visible display of identifier and agency name when responding to civil disturbances).

⁹ FOX 32 Chicago — *Broadview police launch investigation after CBS reporter’s car allegedly was fired at with chemical munition* (Sept. 28, 2025).

Finally, I urge DHS to meet promptly with press-freedom organizations and Illinois news outlets to establish lawful and safe press-police protocols—ensuring journalists can report without fear and the First Amendment remains secure.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress