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AMERICA'S UNIONS

January 28, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Thune:

I am writing to urge you as the leaders of the majority party in both houses of Congress to act responsibly in this grave moment for our republic.

It is time for the first branch of government, the one you and your party colleagues control, to perform its fundamental duty not only to conduct oversight but dramatically curtail the lawless, unconstitutional, and terroristic activities of an agency that the Congress clearly overfunded last year. As you know, through the budget reconciliation process last summer, Congress provided the Department of Homeland Security with \$150 billion in supplemental funds for immigration enforcement, with a complete lack of guardrails to protect fundamental rights. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement now has a budget bigger than all but 15 of the world's largest militaries, and the U.S. government now has 91 times more funds available for immigration enforcement than for the enforcement of the nation's labor laws.

The One Big Beautiful Bill has amounted to a blank check for Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, paid for by taking health care and food assistance away from millions of American families. With that blank check, the leadership at DHS has engaged in wide-ranging and relentless violations of the constitutional rights of citizens and noncitizens alike.

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DHS agents have deployed into American neighborhoods and workplaces, hiding behind masks and donning fatigues and assault weaponry. They have behaved like an occupying force, breaking into people's homes and vehicles without warrants, and arresting first and asking questions later.

These lawless actions have violated people's fundamental rights, shattered their sense of safety, and sown deep division. For example, in this first month of 2026, two of the three homicides in Minneapolis were committed by agents working for Secretary Noem, often in broad daylight and captured on video. One of the victims was a dedicated public service worker and union member who cared for our veterans as an intensive care unit nurse at the local Veterans Affairs hospital; another was a dedicated mother, writer and neighbor known for her kindness. Both bore witness to ICE's activity and paid with their lives. In less public violations, dozens of union members doing vital work in the Minnesota economy have been among those arrested without basis or due process and detained in inhumane conditions in tent camps in the Texas desert. It is impossible to capture with words the depth of outrage we are feeling at these and other events—like using a five-year-old child to knock on a door during an ICE operation—or the shame our country is feeling on the world stage because of them.

Congress has the power to stop this dangerous campaign of terror. It needs to act proactively to address Americans' concerns. When Congress does nothing despite widespread demands for action, the only venue to effectuate change becomes must-pass measures like those that maintain government funding. That is no way to run a legislature. The brinksmanship should be rendered unnecessary by action and leadership by the party in control. In short, the country needs you to lead, to press your own caucus and engage the other side to find ways forward that avoid another shutdown and that address the spiraling crisis in American communities. It is time to put the national interest over partisan politics.

Regardless of how the current funding cliff is resolved, the following actions must be undertaken in due course:

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- Minnesotans should have their communities back. Their trauma must come to an end. Operation Metro Surge and ICE surge operations in Minnesota and all our communities must cease immediately, and those forces must be withdrawn.
- ICE should not be funded like a mass-military operation. Federal funding priorities must be rebalanced by rescinding the irresponsible amounts of taxpayer dollars that Congress appropriated last year for building the President's mass deportation operation, which is spreading terror and division across American cities. Other priorities—ones that serve everyday Americans—should be properly funded instead.
- Fully independent and transparent investigations must be initiated into the many assaults by ICE and other federal agencies on our physical safety and constitutional rights, including the shootings on the streets of our cities, the deaths in custody that are climbing at for-profit detention centers, and the coercive threats and physical assaults against observers and peaceful protesters. All responsible parties must be held accountable—including Secretary Noem, whose actions and inactions already warrant her removal from office. Given Attorney General Pam Bondi's offer to end immigration enforcement operations in Minnesota in exchange for the state's voter rolls, a congressional investigation must examine the true purpose of these operations and why they target particular states and cities.
- Congress must urgently advance a set of bipartisan policies designed to rein in abusive immigration enforcement practices, impose clear rules of engagement, and safeguard the rights of all members of our unions and communities. This must include measures to safeguard the right to protest, prevent the masking of agents, racial profiling stops, warrantless arrests, and enforcement at sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals and places of worship.

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This is a moment for political courage and patriotic devotion to the U.S. Constitution, the rule of law, and genuine public service. I ask you to exercise the power Congress wields in defense of the American people and for the preservation of our democratic experiment. Your actions can change the course of events in dramatic fashion—and the current course of events needs dramatic changing.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elizabeth H. Shuler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Elizabeth H. Shuler

President

cc: The Honorable Charles Schumer, Senate Minority Leader
 The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, House Minority Leader