

**Written Testimony of
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U.S. House of Representatives
“False Narratives Surrounding Conditions at the Delaney Hall ICE Detention Center”
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Chairman Van Drew, Ranking Member Crockett, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear today.

For more than 24 years I served in federal immigration enforcement — at the legacy INS and then at ICE, retiring as Deputy Director in New York. I ran detention operations. I personally managed hunger strikes, in-custody medical emergencies, and facility inspections. I also spent more than three decades in the U.S. Army, including as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the theater internment facility at Camp Cropper, in Baghdad.

I have run a detention facility in a war zone.

So when I tell you how a place like Delaney Hall actually works, I am not theorizing. I am describing what I did for a living. The views I offer are my own and not those of ICE.

Let me start with what the critics driving this hearing will not say out loud. Detention standards are not aspirational. Delaney Hall runs under enforceable national standards that are inspected, audited by multiple entities, and written down. When a detainee declares a hunger strike, nothing is left to an officer's discretion. It triggers a written protocol: medical referral, daily monitoring, weigh-ins, a paper trail at every step.

The facts are available to you. They're written down. Congress can conduct oversight to reveal the truth. Instead of manufacturing hoaxes for partisan gain, the record will not support the allegations that brought us here.

Take the hunger strike. DHS reported that commissary sales at Delaney Hall nearly tripled while it was supposedly underway — from about \$11,500 the week before May 26 to more than \$30,000 the week before June 1. People who are starving themselves in protest do not triple their commissary spending. It is not a hunger strike when a detainee refuses meals at chow time only to stuff his face with Hot Cheetos and Twinkies in his dormitory at night.

Take overcrowding. When the social unrest started outside of Delaney Hall, claims of overcrowding fed the false narrative and contributed to the anger. Delaney Hall is built for up to 1,000 beds. The population was 766 on May 25, when these claims first surfaced, and fell to 521 by June 15 — barely half full.

Take the food. A New Jersey state health inspection on June 8 found kitchen sanitation satisfactory, with no evidence of rodents or vermin. The menu accommodates religious diets. The Border Czar showed up unannounced and ate the same meal served to detainees. It was fine.

Take the history. This building operated as an ICE detention site from 2011 to 2017 — six years — and New Jersey's leaders said nothing. The standards haven't changed. The building hasn't changed. What changed is who sits in the White House.

The double standard runs deeper. Last year, 33 people died in ICE facilities nationwide. In New Jersey's own state prisons, an average of 48 died every single year from 2018 to 2024. No one marched outside those prisons. This was never about conditions.

And it is not about money — because New Jersey has never minded the money. The state collected more than \$4 million in Fiscal Year 2024 to hold criminal aliens in its own Department of Corrections, and roughly \$5.8 million in all under the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program. Delaney Hall supports about 300 union jobs and an estimated \$50 million a year in local economic activity, and its owner pays real property taxes to the City of Newark.

The state cashes the checks. Then its leaders drive to the gate for the cameras.

And what gets sold to the public as peaceful protest is really something else. It's coordinated activity meant to obstruct lawful federal operations. Newark has told its own police not to respond to calls at Delaney Hall. The Americans working inside that building are Newark taxpayers. They are being denied police protection for doing a lawful job.

The men and women at Delaney Hall enforce laws that this Congress wrote, under standards stricter than the jails that hold American citizens. They deserve better than to be used as props. So do the facts.

There is a tell in how the critics operate. Senator Booker announced his visit on social media. Senator Kim came for a meeting. Congressman Rob Menendez, and Congresswoman Watson Coleman turned the anniversary of their own visit into a bill rollout and a video. Congresswoman McIver is currently under federal indictment on three counts, including two felonies, for allegedly assaulting and impeding federal law enforcement officers at this facility.

When they want a moment, they bring a podium and a camera. Enough with the theatrics.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.