

RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK
GEORGIA

SUITE 717
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-3643

201 17TH STREET NW, SUITE 530
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30363
(770) 694-7828

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
AGING

AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY

BANKING

FINANCE

October 30, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Secretary Noem and Attorney General Bondi:

I write in light of the recent immigration enforcement action at the HL-GA Battery facility in Bryan County, Georgia and President Trump's comments that he was "very much opposed" to the handling of the raid.¹ While I strongly believe that all companies operating in the United States must follow the law, I share many of President Trump's concerns. This raid's nearly 500 arrests have seemingly not resulted in any significant criminal or civil enforcement actions. Meanwhile, its handling raises serious questions regarding this Administration's enforcement priorities—particularly its stated commitment to combating violent crime, respect for civil rights and due process, and support for economic growth in Georgia and international trade with our allies.

On September 4, 2025, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents led "Operation Low Voltage," an immigration enforcement action at the HL-GA Battery facility.² Over 400 federal, state, and local law enforcement agents participated in the operation – the largest at a single site in HSI history.³ The agents acted pursuant to a federal search warrant, which named four individuals as "target persons" and authorized agents to seize documents and records related to the alleged unlawful employment of migrant workers.⁴

¹ Betsy Klein, *Trump Says He Was "Very Much Opposed" to Handling of ICE Raid at Hyundai Plant*, CNN (Oct. 27, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/trump-asia-trip-japan-10-27-25?post-id=cmh8rrei000053b6n359xwt9d>.

² *OPERATION LOW VOLTAGE- Homeland Security Investigations Executes Federal Search Warrant at the HL-GA Battery Company, LLC, Located on the Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant American Campus in Ellabell, Georgia*, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Georgia (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdga/pr/operation-low-voltage-homeland-security-investigations-executes-federal-search-warrant>.

³ Nicole Acevedo, Laura Strickler, and Gary Grumbach, *Hundreds of South Korean Nationals Detained in Largest Single-site Immigration Raid*, NBC News (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/hundreds-south-korean-nationals-detained-largest-single-site-immigrati-rcna229312>.

⁴ Joseph Schwartzburt and Ansley Franco, *LG Battery Plant ICE Operation: Details Emerge After Raid of Hyundai Megasite in Georgia*, Savannah Morning News (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/2025/09/10/ice-warrant-for-hyundai-megasitein-ellabell-georgia-sought-four-target-persons/86043831007>.

According to eyewitness accounts of the enforcement action, masked and armed agents⁵ arrived at the HL-GA facility around 10:45 AM and began separating workers.⁶ Then, after ordering workers to put their belongings in mesh bags, the agents reportedly arrested the workers, loaded them onto buses in handcuffs and chains, and transported them to the Folkston Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Processing Center (“Folkston”) for detention.⁷ Those arrested have also alleged poor conditions at Folkston, as I have previously raised for your attention.⁸

475 workers were arrested during the HL-GA immigration action;⁹ around two-thirds of the arrested workers were South Korean nationals, while the rest were nationals of Mexico, Colombia, and other countries.¹⁰ All but one of the arrested South Korean workers have subsequently returned to their home country, alongside 14 non-Koreans, after negotiations between the U.S. and South Korean governments secured their release.¹¹

An unknown number of the detained workers appear to have violated no law, raising serious questions as to why they were arrested. Lawyers for multiple individuals taken into ICE custody during the immigration action say that their clients had valid work authorization, including people with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Temporary Protected Status, while others were in the process of seeking asylum.¹² Many South Koreans arrested during the operation have also said that they were following the terms of their visas.¹³ For at least one of these individuals, ICE itself determined that no violation had occurred, yet local ICE leadership ordered that he be sent back to South Korea anyway.¹⁴

Following this action, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung has warned that South Korean businesses “will hesitate to make direct investments in the United States” going forward, while

⁵ Alaa Elassar, Isabel Rosales, and Carroll Alvarado, *Inside the Raid: How a Monthslong Federal Immigration Operation Led to 475 Arrests at a Hyundai Plant in Georgia*, CNN (Sept. 6, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/09/06/us/georgia-hyundai-plant-raid-timeline>.

⁶ Sharon Terlep and Ryan Felton, *How the Immigration Raid at Hyundai's Factory Complex Unfolded*, Wall Street Journal (Sept. 6, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/business/autos/hyundai-ice-raid-factory-213ff58f>.

⁷ Choe Sang-Hun, ‘America Is Not a Safe Place to Work’: Koreans Describe Georgia Raid, New York Times (Sept. 24, 2025), <http://nytimes.com/2025/09/24/world/asia/south-korea-georgia-hyundai-ice-raid.html>.

⁸ *Id.*; see Warnock, *Ossoff Press Trump Administration Over Deaths in ICE Custody*, Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock (Sept. 23, 2025), <https://www.warnock.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warnock-ossoff-press-trump-administration-over-deaths-in-ice-custody> (outlining concerns over conditions at ICE facilities in Georgia and throughout the country, with a focus on Stewart Detention Center).

⁹ John Yoon, Jenny Gross, Aimee Ortiz, and Ashley Ahn, *South Koreans Are Swept Up in Immigration Raid at Hyundai Plant in Georgia*, New York Times (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/05/us/georgia-battery-plant-hyundai-lg-ice-raid.html>.

¹⁰ Lydia DePillis and Hamed Aleaziz, *Georgia ICE Raid Netted Workers with Short-Term Business Visas*, New York Times (Sept. 12, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/12/business/economy/hyundai-raid-worker-visas.html>.

¹¹ Ji Da-gyum, *US Reentry Guaranteed for Koreans Detained in Georgia Raid: Minister*, Korea Herald (Sept. 11, 2025), <https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10573415>.

¹² Safiyah Riddle, *Families in Crisis After Massive Immigration Raid at Hyundai Plant in Georgia*, AP News (Sept. 13, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/georgia-immigration-raid-hyundai-families-bf4a28e96645316d759de50d09928594>; DePillis and Aleaziz, *supra* note 10.

¹³ Russ Bynum, Kate Brumback, and Hyung-Jin Kim, *Attorney Says Detained Korean Hyundai Workers Had Special Skills for Short-term Jobs*, AP News (Sept. 8, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/south-korea-us-georgia-raid-hyundai-24d990562f5ac20e7d3e983a77a4f7ff>.

¹⁴ Jose Olivares, *Leaked ICE Document Shows Worker Detained in Hyundai Raid Had Valid Visa*, Guardian (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/10/hyundai-factory-ice-raid-legal-visa>.

Foreign Minister Cho Hyun has emphasized how “shocked and hurt” the people of South Korea were by the treatment of their compatriots.¹⁵ The South Korean foreign ministry has also stated that it will investigate allegations of human rights abuses made by formerly detained South Korean workers.¹⁶

In Bryan County, Georgia, HL-GA Battery is facing delays of at least 2 to 3 months, hampering and delaying the ability of thousands of Georgians to access good-paying manufacturing jobs.¹⁷

Even President Trump noted he was “very much opposed” to the handling of the raid and characterized the workers as “pretty well set” prior to the ICE action.¹⁸

The federal government has a duty to enforce its existing immigration laws, but we must do so in a manner that prioritizes public safety, protects civil rights, comports with due process, supports our economy, and strengthens our strategic relationships with key international allies. Given these concerns, I ask that you respond to the following questions by November 30, 2025:

1. President Trump was stated that he was “very much opposed” to the ICE raid at the HL-GA plant.¹⁹ President Trump has also stated that removing individuals who have committed violent crimes²⁰—the “worst of the worst”²¹—is the top priority of this Administration with respect to immigration enforcement. How does this raid advance the Administration’s priorities?
 - a) Were the four individuals described in the search warrant accused, or convicted, of a violent crime? If so, what crime(s)? What was the basis on which the search warrant was sought?
 - b) Were those four individuals arrested as part of the September 4, 2025 operation?
 - c) Had there been allegations of violent crime committed by other workers at the HL-GA Battery facility? If so, what allegations? When were such allegations first made to the Administration?
2. How many witness interviews related to this investigation were conducted prior to September 4, 2025?
 - a) How many witness interviews have been conducted since September 4, 2025?
 - b) How much data and computer equipment were collected as a result of the September 4, 2025 operation?
 - c) How many criminal indictments have been prepared?

¹⁵ Choe Sang-Hun, *South Korean Leader Warns About Investments in U.S. After Georgia Raid*, New York Times (Sept. 11, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/11/world/asia/south-korea-us-investments-hyundai-raid.html>.

¹⁶ Sang-Hun, *supra* note 7.

¹⁷ Kan Hyeong-Woo, *Hyundai Motor CEO Expects 2-to-3-Month Delay at Georgia Battery Plant in Wake of Immigration Raid*, Korea Herald (Sept. 12, 2025), <https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10574380>.

¹⁸ Klein, *supra* note 1.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Making America Safe Again*, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (Sept. 30, 2025), <https://www.dhs.gov/making-america-safe-again> (noting DHS’s priority of removing “violent criminal illegal aliens”).

²¹ *Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees*, CNN Transcripts (July 3, 2025), <https://transcripts.cnn.com/show/acd/date/2025-07-03/segment/01>.

- d) When do you anticipate closing the investigation?
3. Please describe the federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and components of those agencies involved in the enforcement action, including the number of personnel from each agency or component agency.
 - a) What were the specific roles of each law enforcement agency?
 - b) Which specific officials at DOJ or DHS authorized this immigration enforcement action?
 - c) When did federal officials first contact Georgia state officials regarding the September 4, 2025 operation? Which state officials approved the use of state resources in this immigration action?
 4. Please provide a cost estimate for the operation, including personnel time, equipment, and security arrangements, both in total and broken out by category.
 5. Were Hyundai, LG, or HL-GA Battery given prior notification of the raid? If so, when were they notified?
 6. What assessment, if any, did DOJ or DHS conduct on the potential impact of this action on foreign direct investment, particularly in the electric vehicle and battery sectors? Were the Department of Commerce, U.S. Trade Representative, or State Department consulted before proceeding with this operation against a major foreign-owned employer?
 7. Footage of the raid shows that individuals were shackled before being loaded onto buses.²² On what basis did DHS determine that shackles were necessary?
 - a) Reports allege that some officers pointed guns at workers during the raid.²³ On what basis did DHS determine that pointing firearms at workers was necessary?
 8. How many interpreters were brought on site by law enforcement for the operation, and for what languages?
 - a) Did DHS or any law enforcement at any point separate individuals on the basis of language or English proficiency?
 - b) Some detainees have alleged that officials “never read them their rights or explained why they were being arrested.”²⁴ When did officials discuss or share detainees’ rights with them? In what language(s) did officials communicate these rights?
 9. What training did on-site agents, across all law enforcement agencies involved, receive prior to the raid on the types of visas they would be likely to encounter, including the B-1 visa, B-2 visa, and the Visa Waiver Program?

²² WJCL News, *ICE Releases Video of Raid at Hyundai Megasite*, YouTube (Sept. 7, 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFVWqo2Xp0Q>.

²³ Jean Mackenzie, Serin Ha, and Yuna Ku, *US Officers Tied Us Up and Pointed Guns at Us, South Korean Engineers Tell BBC*, BBC (Sept. 16, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c07v1j98ydvo>.

²⁴ Sang-Hun, *supra* note 7.

10. Did DHS or any law enforcement at any point separate individuals on the basis of race or ethnicity?
11. Did any of the workers detained describe themselves as caregivers of children, the elderly, or disabled individuals? What effort, if any, was made to allow them to make arrangements for the care of their children, elderly, or disabled loved ones?
 - a) Have any children been placed in state services as a result of the detention of their parents in this enforcement operation? If so, how many?
 - b) Were any elderly individuals or individuals with chronic illnesses detained? If so, what accommodations were made for these individuals?
12. Some detainees have alleged that they were denied access to medical aid.²⁵ How many detainees made requests for medical aid? How long was it before detainees were able to receive medical aid? What types of medical aid did detainees receive?
13. Were workers provided with information about access to counsel?
 - a) At what point were workers given the opportunity to speak to counsel? How was this communicated to workers?
 - b) Were workers provided with information about their rights regarding consular notification and access?²⁶ Were consular officials from the affected countries (South Korea, Mexico, Colombia, etc.) notified, and if so, when?
 - c) Some detainees have alleged that phones at Folkston did not permit them to make international calls.²⁷ Are international calls permitted through the phones available at Folkston? If not, how should detainees contact lawyers who may be abroad?
14. Some detainees allege that officials pressured them to sign voluntary departure or stipulated removal orders.²⁸
 - a) How many detainees agreed to voluntary departure? How many agreed to stipulated removal? What factors did DHS consider in determining whether to offer voluntary departure versus stipulated removal?
 - b) Were any workers encouraged to sign documents on site? If so, what documents were presented to workers? How many workers signed documents?
15. Please provide data on the number of individuals arrested or detained in this operation by immigration status, including:
 - a) Current visa holders (broken down by type of visa)
 - b) Those who arrived under the Visa Waiver Program
 - c) Recipients of Temporary Protected Status or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
 - d) Individuals lawfully authorized to work through an asylum or adjustment of status application, or similar
 - e) Lawful permanent residents

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ See *What Is Consular Notification and Access?*, U.S. Department of State, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/consularnotification.html>.

²⁷ Sang-Hun, *supra* note 7.

²⁸ Olivares, *supra* note 14.

- f) U.S. citizens
16. Why were lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens detained?²⁹
- a) How long were permanent residents or U.S. citizens detained?
 - b) What opportunities were these individuals given to provide necessary documentation?
 - c) What steps will DHS or DOJ take to ensure that those here legally are not detained in future operations?
17. Why were individuals with Temporary Protected Status or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals unlawfully detained?³⁰
- a) How long were these individuals detained?
 - b) What opportunities were these individuals given to provide necessary documentation to demonstrate their lawful status?
18. How many of the people arrested in the operation were detained?
- a) How many remain in custody as of October 30, 2025, and at what facilities?
 - b) Please list the number of individuals currently detained by nationality and immigration status.
 - c) How many have been repatriated to other nations? If so, how many and which nations?
19. South Korean officials have publicly said they negotiated with the Trump Administration to win “voluntary” departures of workers rather than deportations that could result in them being ineligible to return to the U.S. for a period of time.³¹ If South Korean nationals have been afforded the opportunity to repatriate voluntarily, will nationals of other nations be allowed to do so as well?
20. The South Korean government has announced that it has come to an agreement with the Trump administration to allow South Korean workers to travel to the U.S. on B-1 visas or through the Visa Waiver Program to “install, service, or repair” equipment brought from abroad to build South Korean factories in the U.S.³²
- a) What is your anticipated timeline for South Korean workers to be able to receive travel authorization and work in the U.S. under this agreement?
 - b) Will this easing of visa restrictions be limited only to South Korean workers at South Korean facilities, or do you anticipate this change applying to nationals or investment projects from other nations?

²⁹ CBS News, *Special Agent Shares Details of Large Immigration Raid at Hyundai Facility in Georgia*, YouTube (Sept. 5, 2025), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShTUzNeQd_k; Yoon, Gross, Ortiz, and Ahn, *supra* note 9.

³⁰ Riddle, *supra* note 12; DePillis and Aleaziz, *supra* note 10.

³¹ Dasi Yoon, *South Korea Says Hyundai Plant Detainees to Go Home Without Being Deported*, Wall Street Journal (Sept. 8, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/world/asia/south-korea-says-hyundai-plant-detainees-will-go-home-without-being-deported-09a10b56>.

³² Choe Sang-Hun, *The U.S. Eases Visa Restrictions on South Korean Workers*, New York Times (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/01/world/asia/south-korea-georgia-factory-visa.html>.

21. This immigration enforcement action has, understandably, shaken the community in South Georgia and the Korean American community throughout the state. What specific actions have DOJ or DHS taken to restore community trust following this raid?
22. Will DOJ or DHS release after-action reports on the immigration enforcement action to Congress and the U.S. public? If so, when? If not, why not?
23. What metrics or criteria does DHS use to determine whether such an immigration enforcement action is considered “successful?” Was this raid, in DHS’s view, “successful”?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Warnock" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Reverend Raphael Warnock
United States Senator