



The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

Mr. Todd Lyons
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St NW
Washington, D.C. 20536

April 13, 2026

Dear Secretary Mullin and Mr. Lyons:

We first take this opportunity to congratulate you on your recent confirmation, Secretary Mullin. We pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you in your continued service to our country.

As pastors compelled by the Gospel's call to uphold the dignity of human life, we write to both of you today on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Pro-Life Activities and Committee on Migration regarding a matter of grave concern. There are increasing numbers of alarming reports of pregnant mothers not getting the medical care they need while in immigration detention, tragically resulting in miscarriage in some cases, as well as reports of nursing mothers being separated from their babies when detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).¹

Last year, our committees expressed deep concern with U.S. Customs and Border Protection's rescission of guidance on caring for pregnant and postpartum mothers and their infants in its custody.² In the case of ICE, however, agency policy still recognizes the vulnerability of these women and their children by generally discouraging their arrest and detention; unfortunately, that policy seems to no longer be followed in practice.

¹ See, e.g., Caroline Kitchener, Charo Henríquez, & Hamed Aleaziz, *Pregnant in ICE Detention: Handcuffs and Pleas for Medical Care*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 20, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/20/us/politics/pregnant-women-ice-detention.html>; Lauren Peace & Ashley Borja, *ICE Detained a Pregnant Woman. She Went Months Without Proper Care*, TAMPA BAY TIMES (Mar. 5, 2026), <https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2026/03/05/ice-detained-pregnant-woman-she-went-months-without-proper-care/>; Kyle Cheney, *Judges Decry Treatment of Nursing and Pregnant Detainees in ICE Custody*, POLITICO (Feb. 28, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/02/18/pregnant-nursing-ice-detainees-00784683>; Ashley Borja & Juan Carlos Chavez, *Immigrant Mothers Are Being Detained by ICE, Despite Federal Protections*, TAMPA BAY TIMES (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida/2026/01/14/ice-detention-pregnant-women-nursing-mothers-postpartum-women-florida-/>; Kelly Rissman, *Miscarriages, Infections, Neglect: The Pregnant Women Detained by ICE*, THE INDEPENDENT (Dec. 3, 2025), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/pregnant-women-detained-ice-miscarriage-b2859964.html>; Sara Cline & Valerie Gonzalez, *Immigrant Rights Group Says Pregnant Women in ICE Detention Received Inadequate Care*, PBS NEWS (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/immigrant-rights-group-says-pregnant-women-in-ice-detention-received-inadequate-care>; see also *Open Letter to Trump Administration about ICE Detention of Pregnant Women*, REHUMANIZE INT'L (Feb. 12, 2026), <https://www.rehumanizeintl.org/post/protect-immigrant-mothers>.

² Press Release, USCCB, *Protecting Pregnant Mothers and their Children Can Never be Considered 'Obsolete'* (May 19, 2025), <https://www.usccb.org/news/2025/protecting-pregnant-mothers-and-their-children-can-never-be-considered-obsolete>.



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

We urge ICE to abide consistently by Directive 11032.4, *Identification and Monitoring of Pregnant, Postpartum, or Nursing Individuals*, which is already in place, and thereby to avoid the arrest and detention of pregnant and postpartum mothers, absent exceptional circumstances (per the Directive, national security concerns or imminent risk of physical danger to themselves or others). Doing so would be consistent with this Administration's recent pro-life actions, including those explicitly welcomed by the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities in January.³

No matter one's immigration status, there is no overarching justification for separating nursing infants from their mothers or endangering the health and safety of pregnant women or their preborn babies. In this regard, we urge you in the strongest possible terms to extend the Administration's commitments on life to all vulnerable mothers, infants, and children in the womb.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Handwritten signature of Daniel E. Thomas in black ink.

Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo
Chairman, Committee on Pro-Life Activities

Handwritten signature of Brendan J. Cahill in black ink.

Most Reverend Brendan J. Cahill
Bishop of Victoria
Chairman, Committee on Migration

³ Press Release, USCCB, Chairman's Statement in Gratitude for Executive Actions Protecting Preborn Children (Jan. 27, 2026), <https://www.usccb.org/resources/26-pl-executive-actions-statement.pdf>.