

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

Dear Secretary Noem,

*I write today with grave concern regarding the detention of children from Minnesota. Our state is relieved that five-year-old Liam Conejo Ramos, a preschool student from Columbia Heights, Minnesota, is back home with his family and can receive the care he needs. He should never have been taken in the first place.*

*But incredibly, his case is only one of many. Each day brings new reports of children detained by ICE. Liam is not even the only child from his Columbia Heights [school district](#). Indeed, your administration has gone so far as to establish so-called [“tender age” shelters](#) for babies and young children taken into federal custody. This is all the more disturbing given that the judiciary in Minnesota and across the nation has made clear – hundreds of times – that this kind of detention is wrong and cannot stand. And reports of a [measles outbreak in your Dilley family detention facility](#) add risks for children in your custody and threaten the health and safety of all Minnesotans when they return home.*

*Since December 1, 2025, over 600 individuals have filed cases in federal district in Minnesota challenging their detention. Minnesota’s federal bench, including those appointed by President Trump, has said clearly and uniformly that your department’s detention practices are not following the law. This conduct needs to stop.*

*Every day I field calls from parents, educators, and families across our state who are scared of armed men with masks; they are afraid to go outside for recess; they are afraid for classmates who they haven’t seen. As a result, children are staying home from school, missing meals, and living in fear—regardless of immigration status. This is the opposite of public safety. It erodes trust, traumatizes communities, and places children directly in harm’s way.*

*To prevent others from having to go through the pain Liam and his family endured, I am making the following demands:*

- 1. Follow court orders to release wrongfully detained Minnesotans.*
- 2. Provide detailed information about all individuals detained or arrested in Minnesota who are currently being held in detention facilities, and the health status of each. Please prioritize information about detained children.*
- 3. Cease enforcement tactics that place children at risk or use them as leverage during operations.*
- 4. Reinstate DHS’ Sensitive Locations policy. For decades DHS issued standing guidance for ICE to refrain from immigration enforcement in commonsense areas like schools. As*

*Americans, we should all put the wellbeing of children first, and you should immediately reinstate this policy.*

- 5. Designate a DHS point of contact with authority to lead federal-state coordination with my office and relevant state agencies to provide relevant information and resolve reunification issues for our children in real time.*

*I recognize the Department of Homeland Security's responsibility for federal enforcement actions. But these actions must be carried out lawfully, humanely, and consistent with our shared responsibility to protect children. Minnesota will not accept a system in which fear replaces fairness and children and families are treated as collateral damage. We take pride in being a top state for children and families and will not allow federal actions to take that away from us. Public safety depends on transparency, accountability, and respect for human dignity, especially when children are involved.*

*No child should be incarcerated in America. Send our kids home.*

*Sincerely,*

*Tim Walz  
Governor of Minnesota*