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Re: Human Rights Watch research on immigration detention

Dear Negotiators,

As you continue to debate immigration enforcement and border spending, we write to urge you to consider two reasons, grounded in Human Rights Watch's research, why Congress should reduce immigration detention bed space and should certainly not appropriate additional dollars to increase bed space:

- Every existing and additional immigration detention bed means one more person at risk of suffering due to [harsh conditions](#) and [inadequate medical care](#) provided by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.
- Congress should grapple with the reality that taxpayer dollars are already being spent under the current detention bed mandate to [arrest and lock up people who call the United States home](#)—including mothers, fathers, and spouses of US citizens; tax-paying employees; and respected community members. The [overwhelming majority](#) of people detained with “criminal” arrests or conviction records are people who committed

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minor infractions – including drug possession and traffic offenses – or who were [criminalized for immigrating](#).

We look to Congress and this conference committee to use the conference report for the FY2019 DHS Appropriations bill to take steps toward reining in an agency that has operated in an abusive manner and with impunity. We urge all Members of Congress to continue to reject the President’s efforts to use the debate around immigration enforcement to fund his abusive and xenophobic policy proposals. We call on you to demonstrate bold leadership, reset the course toward good governance and accountability, and work to re-align DHS spending with human rights norms and our shared values of dignity, fairness, and common sense.

Sincerely,



Jasmine L. Tyler
Advocacy Director
US Program, Human Rights Watch
HRW.org
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CC:

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
US Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
US Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
US House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
US House of Representatives

Members of the US House of Representatives

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