

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 13, 2017

The Honorable John F. Kelly
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington DC 20528

Dear Secretary Kelly,

We write to request that you direct U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers who are working on non-undercover duty to wear clothing and equipment that clearly indicates that they are ICE officers and not local police. Our local law enforcement agencies work hard to develop public trust in the communities they serve, and those relationships are critical to maintaining public safety, law, and order. If residents in our communities, particularly our immigrant communities, become fearful that police officers are there to target rather than protect them, public safety will suffer and crimes are more likely to go unreported. Further, a lack of clarity about which law enforcement agencies are on the scene and authorized to engage during a crime, violent altercation, or criminal investigation creates potentially dangerous confusion for both the public and local police agencies.

Most other federal law enforcement officers perform their duties with clear identification and without identifying themselves as simply “police.” For example, Federal Bureau of Investigations officers—who, like ICE agents, often work in our communities in potentially dangerous situations as federal law enforcement agents—wear uniforms and clothing that clearly indicate their FBI affiliation. When ICE agents enter communities with clothing and equipment that deceptively suggest they are local police, it erodes public trust in local law enforcement, makes it more difficult for local police to build relationships with the communities they serve, and inserts a dangerous potential for confusion.

Connecticut police chiefs share our concerns. As Hartford Police Chief James Rovella remarked after a recent incident involving ICE officers who identified themselves only as police, “All law enforcement officials, not acting in an undercover capacity, working in our community should be readily identified by the agencies that they represent. ICE agents should not identify as local police as it is misleading and can damage the important relationship with our local communities.”¹

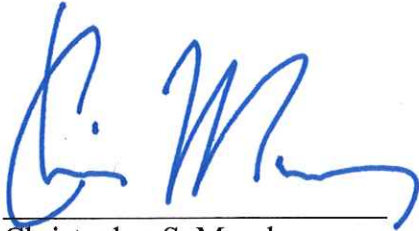
We strongly believe that in order to keep communities safe, people must feel comfortable coming forward if they are a victim of or witness to a crime. When residents trust the police, law enforcement agencies are able to direct their limited resources to respond to threats posed by truly dangerous criminals. We know you share our commitment to public safety, and therefore urge you to listen to our concerns and those of local law enforcement officers by directing ICE

¹ Rondinone, N., & Vella, V. (2017, March 20). Hartford Mayor: ICE Agents Were Misleading In Attempt To Detain Immigrant. *Hartford Courant*. Retrieved from <http://www.courant.com/breaking-news/hc-hartford-ice-0321-20170320-story.html>

officers to wear properly identifying clothing and equipment when working in local communities.

Thank you for the important work you do in protecting U.S. security. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



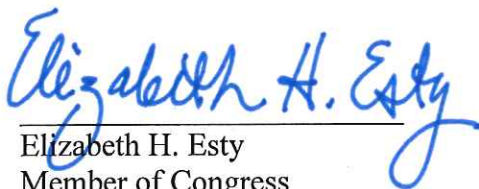
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress