



September 11, 2025

Peter B. Hegseth  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
1400 Defense Pentagon,  
Washington, DC 20301

Kristi L. Noem  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Department of Homeland Security  
1880 2nd Street SW  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Noem:

We are gravely concerned about the decision by the Secretary of Defense to designate U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) installation Naval Station Great Lakes (NSGL) as a staging location for U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) personnel for federal law and immigration enforcement operations. This decision undermines the integrity of the base's mission as a training facility for the U.S. Navy and the service's sole boot camp. We are deeply concerned that this decision will hinder our military's readiness while sparking confusion and fear in the communities we represent. We urge you not to use our servicemembers and facilities in pursuit of partisan ends instead of our national interest.

We are further concerned by reports that DoD's support is based on verbal agreements instead of standard written ones. Verbal agreements are susceptible to mission creep, vulnerable to being incorrectly and poorly communicated, and prevent transparency and accountability to American taxpayers and their elected representatives. This Administration has demonstrated unprecedented, insulting disregard towards our country's laws and norms, undermining the American people's rights and our democracy itself. The announced surge of federal law and immigration enforcement activity in Chicago has been conducted in an *ad hoc*, unprofessional manner that dodges constitutionally established oversight and accountability to the citizens of this country.

On August 28, 2025, DHS requested DoD assistance at NSGL, including office spaces and storage of less than lethal munitions for DHS personnel. We have received no official notification from DoD about the approval of this request or any associated plans.

We visited NSGL because your agencies were uncooperative in our constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the executive branch of government. We were shocked that DHS refused to meet with us. This Administration's contempt for any oversight of its actions was further underscored by the flippant act of locking the doors to deny Members of Congress access to the office building that DHS is set to occupy. We are concerned that the agencies you oversee would not be operating in secrecy if their actions were legal and defensible.

While Navy leadership did meet openly and helpfully with us during and after our visit, sharing details of NSGL's current scope of support for DHS, we were deeply concerned to hear that these specifics have only been captured in verbal agreements. This sort of unofficial, handshake agreement is not sufficient for operations as sensitive as these. Our understanding from our visit

was that DoD support to DHS at NSGL will be confined to reimbursable support in the form of storage for non-lethal munitions and office space, with no access to housing or storage of lethal munitions.

We are deeply concerned that DoD may be supporting federal law enforcement actions that have not been coordinated with local and state authorities. We believe that common sense limits on DOD support for DHS at NSGL are important for reassuring the local community and minimizing impacts to the Navy's mission. And of course, we insist that any such guardrails must be in writing.

In order to continue in our oversight role, we ask that you furnish us with the following documents as they relate to planned DHS operations at or out of NSGL by September 18, 2025:

1. Documentation regarding DoD's approval of DHS's 28 August Request for Assistance, to include written confirmation of the start and end date of DHS presence on NSGL and written confirmation that any such presence will be funded entirely by DHS.
2. Copies of all formal or informal communications – including emails, texts, chats, memoranda or other documents – between DHS and DoD discussing requests for DHS support at NSGL since January 2025.
3. Copies of all internal DoD records since January 2025 discussing the range of possible requests for NSGL related support to Federal law enforcement, including NSGL's ability to support DHS personnel or active-duty personnel, as well as copies of all internal DHS records since January 2025 discussing the range of possible requests of NSGL to support DHS operations in Illinois.
4. Copies of all formal or informal communications since January 2025 to and from NSGL personnel – including emails, texts, memoranda or other documents -- related to available support NSGL could provide to DHS and any installation-level risk assessment of that support and any additional support.
5. Copies of any formal or informal communications since January 2025 – including emails, texts, memoranda or other documents - internal to DHS, internal to DoD and between DoD and DHS regarding providing facilities on NSGL to DHS for any purpose.
6. Written confirmation that no resources currently allocated to or personnel stationed at NSGL will be redirected to support DHS's activities.
7. Written confirmation that no DHS-managed lethal munitions will be stored on NSGL.
8. Written confirmation that no individuals apprehended by DHS will be detained on NSGL.

9. Written confirmation that no personnel from NSGL will be asked to assist DHS in any way related to arresting, detaining, or engaging in federal law and immigration enforcement against individuals.
10. Written confirmation that no housing accommodations will be provided to DHS personnel.
11. Records of any guidance DoD has provided to servicemembers assigned to NSGL regarding appropriate interactions with DHS personnel and Federal agents.
12. Records of any guidance DHS has provided to its personnel regarding its operations on and out of NSGL.
13. Written confirmation that DHS personnel will wear clear labels identifying themselves and their organizational affiliation when within NSGL grounds, entering and exiting NSGL and operating in Illinois.
14. Copies of all formal or informal communications – including emails, texts, memoranda or other documents – within and between your agencies discussing possible deployments or mobilization of Active-Duty, National Guard or Reserve forces in Illinois since January 2025.

We strongly urge your agencies to reverse the decision to allow a staging presence for DHS at NSGL and any other military installation in Illinois. We oppose any wasteful diversion of attention and taxpayer dollars away from the core mission of NSGL and any other military installations toward unrelated law enforcement activities and the intimidation of our communities.

Sincerely,



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator