

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 22, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to request that you move expeditiously to close the Glades County Detention Center in Moore Haven, Florida. Glades operates as a migrant detention center under contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This detention center has a troubling history of abuses and continues to generate reports of alleged medical neglect, excessive use of force, and other violations of human dignity. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Department to terminate its contract with Glades County and close this facility.

We commend the Department and the Biden administration for your efforts to raise standards of care throughout the civil immigration enforcement process, especially after the last administration established policies that facilitated deplorable and even deadly conditions in migrant detention centers. However, our nation's migrant detention system continues to expose detained people to inhumane conditions at significant costs to American taxpayers. As you know, ICE operates more than 200 facilities nationwide. ICE must continue to systematically evaluate the quality of care at each facility and move to close or terminate contracts with facilities that fail to meet basic standards of care. Glades stands out as such a facility. Additionally, as transfers of detained people continue to happen across the country to the southern U.S., and with COVID-19 outbreaks still plaguing our region's facilities, we must avoid transfers to and from detention centers like Glades.

Advocacy, legal, and medical organizations across the country have reported that Glades has exhibited some of the most egregious cases of the systemic inhumanity that plagues the migrant detention system. A coalition of organizations, including Americans for Immigrant Justice, Freedom for Immigrants, Immigrant Action Alliance, the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida, Doctors for Camp Closure, Detention Watch Network, United We Dream, Florida Immigrant Coalition, and others have filed lawsuits and complaints on behalf of detained people who have suffered abuses at Glades.

In February, several of these organizations jointly filed a multi-individual civil rights complaint with the DHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL). The complaint includes 25 testimonies of currently and formerly detained individuals. These testimonies detail patterns of medical abuse; lack of soap, hygiene products, sanitation, and PPE; continued transfers between facilities without quarantine; failures to follow court orders to release individuals from Glades; retaliation for peaceful protest, including a pattern of off-camera physical assault; use of toxic chemical spray in enclosed spaces; and

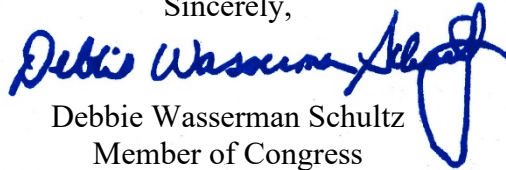
hospitalizations and death. Since February, additional CRCL complaints have been filed, demonstrating that conditions at Glades have not substantially improved.

Further, Glades should be closed for the sake of good governance and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. The detention center is not operationally necessary. ICE has guaranteed Glades County payment for 300 beds, yet the current population is around 60. Our constituents should not be paying for a facility that is at one-fifth capacity and that routinely disrespects the humanity of those detained there.

It is important that the Biden administration take this opportunity to end the previous administration's legacy of immigrant rights abuses. Terminating the contract with Glades County and closing this facility would be a critical step towards the Department's larger goal of creating a fairer, more just, and more efficient civil immigration system.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Val B. Demings  
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress