Senator Lindsey Graham, Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
Senator Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee

I am Thomas Cartwright with Witness at the Border. Just today, we just published a report analyzing likely ICE Air flights for the period of January 1 through April 30, 2020. We believe this is the first time anyone has tried to quantify the domestic flights of ICE Air, which they do not disclose.

We respectfully request that this statement and the accompanying report be entered into the record for the Senate Judiciary Committee Meeting, “Examining Best Practices for Incarceration and Detention during COVID-19” to be held Tuesday, 2 June, 2020.

Here are the likely ICE Air flights included in our detailed analysis for Jan 1 – April 30, 2020:

**Total flights:** 1,677
- Deportation flights and related returns: 634
- Domestic flights: 1,043

Of the domestic flights there were only 214 that were direct connections on the same day/same plane to deportation flights.

**On a YTD basis through May:**

- Total Flights: 2,031
- Deportation flights and related returns: 753
- Domestic flights: 1,278

Of the domestic flights there were only 272 that were direct connections on the same day/same plane to deportation flights.

What is absolutely striking is the number of domestic flights between January and April from one ICE detention location to another in the midst of the pandemic.

When you consider every landing and takeoff is a possible transfer point and a chance to seed and spread COVID, the 1,043 domestic flights alone strike us as an incredible and deadly risk to not just detainees, but to ICE Staff/contractors, and to the communities that house detention centers.

The congregate detention center environment alone is a risk too far, but to add the churn of over 1,000 flights between ICE locations is irresponsible and unconscionable.

The attached report “ICE Air: 1,677 Flights While COVID-19 Rages” goes into great detail in describing ICE Air flights, the detention center environment, and the risk they combine to transmit COVID-19.

This report focused primarily on domestic ICE Air flights as our prior report “ICE Air Deportations; Has COVID-19 Changed Anything?” analyzed likely deportation flights.

Many thanks,
Thomas Cartwright
Witness at the Border