

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

August 25, 2020

James McHenry  
Director  
Executive Office for Immigration Review  
5107 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041

Matthew T. Albence  
Deputy Director and Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20536

Dear Director McHenry and Deputy Director Albence:

We urge you to expeditiously facilitate access to the Legal Orientation Program (LOP) to all detention facilities in Illinois where U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees are held.

Congress has emphatically rejected efforts by the Trump Administration to discredit LOP and reduce its funding. In fact, Congress has strongly supported LOP on a bipartisan, bicameral basis and increased its funding. In the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116–93), Congress appropriated \$18 million for services provided by LOP, including \$3 million for the Immigration Help Desk, and directed the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) to “continue all LOP services and activities without interruption, including during any review of the program.”

The House Appropriations Committee has strongly supported expanded access to LOP and has found that, “LOP improves the efficiency of court proceedings, reduces court costs, and helps ensure fairness and due process.” The Senate Appropriations Committee has likewise emphasized that, “LOP benefits taxpayers by increasing the efficiency of immigration proceedings and reducing costs related to immigration detention” and has directed EOIR to pay attention to geographic equity as LOP expands, noting the particular need for legal services at more remote immigration detention centers.

LOP is currently funded at a higher level than in previous years, and the number of detainees currently in ICE custody is far lower than before the COVID-19 pandemic began. It is apparent that EOIR has the capacity to expand LOP access to new facilities. We urge EOIR and ICE to work together to immediately facilitate LOP access, including meaningful remote access, to all ICE detainees in Illinois.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress