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AMOL SINHA
Executive Director
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August 11, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Hon. Jim Jordan
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
2056 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Jefferson Van Drew
Chairman, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight
2447 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

ADDENDUM TO WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

Amol Sinha, Executive Director

American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey

House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Oversight

Hearing Subject: "False Narratives Surrounding Conditions at the Delaney Hall ICE Detention Center"

Dear Committee Chair Jordan, Subcommittee Chair Van Drew, and members of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight:

On July 22, 2026, I testified before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight during a hearing titled "False Narratives Surrounding Conditions at the Delaney Hall ICE Detention Center." During that hearing, Chairman Van Drew and the witnesses he invited claimed that the corroborated reports of systematic and egregious medical neglect - including of those with serious health conditions - unhygienic facilities, and inedible food, were "false." Chairman Van Drew said that detained people who made the impossible choice of starving themselves to shed light onto cruelty and abuse they faced at the hands of ICE and The GEO Group were lying. He went on to praise the medical, dental, and mental health care provided at the facility, and claimed that there was 24-hour emergency care when needed.

At the hearing, I warned about the dire human cost of a rapidly expanding detention system, especially one run by an unaccountable agency and its private prison partners, with little to no transparency or oversight. While Rep. Van Drew invoked vague, unsupported anecdotes about the “nice gym” at the detention center, I spoke the name of Jean Wilson Brutus, a 41-year-old Haitian man who died on December 12, 2025, only a day after being detained at Delaney Hall.

During the hearing I amplified the voices of those currently and formerly detained at Delaney Hall. *“They tell us we have no rights here,”* they said. I shared the stories of people being denied life-sustaining medication and an individual denied their wheelchair. I testified about the experience of a man who lost 20 pounds in one month at Delaney Hall. I shared the story of an individual whose reports of severe abdominal pain were ignored; when he was released, he required surgery for a condition he developed while detained.

Meanwhile, Rep. Van Drew and the other witnesses questioned the validity of the hunger strike at Delaney Hall. They callously alleged that detained individuals were eating “Twinkies and chips” at the facility, without bothering to interrogate why adults might be driven to live off of commissary food at a facility that is legally required to provide nutritious meals three times a day, and without questioning the predatory greed of The GEO Group, profiting off vulnerable detained individuals who have no option but to get the calories necessary for survival from commissary.

As on the day of the hearing, recent events once again demonstrate that the assertions made by Chairman Van Drew do not survive contact with the truth.

In the two weeks following that July 22 hearing, the country learned about several more deaths in ICE custody or shortly after release. Two of those deaths were of individuals who were detained at Delaney Hall: Edwin Jovanny Lopez Cornejo and a man whose name has not been released to the public. Their stories refute the premise of the hearing altogether – the notion that reports of medical neglect, abuse, and maltreatment at Delaney Hall are part of a “false narrative.”

Mr. Lopez Cornejo’s and the unnamed victim’s stories deserve to be told. Their stories expose the *real* narrative of Delaney Hall and facilities like it – a narrative of egregious neglect, deplorable conditions, and sheer indifference to the plight of individuals suffering as a result of ICE’s abuse. **To that end, I respectfully submit this supplement to my testimony from July 22, 2026, and request that the congressional record be updated to include it.**

Edwin Jovanny Lopez Cornejo, a 39-year-old Salvadoran immigrant, had been a resident of Plainfield, NJ for more than 20 years.¹ He held a job in construction, and was an upstanding member of his community, a beloved son, and a loving father to a 12-year-old U.S. citizen daughter.

¹ <https://www.nj.com/essex/2026/08/detainee-dies-at-newarks-delaney-hall-ice-facility-officials-say.html>

On June 18, 2026, Mr. Lopez Cornejo was detained by ICE while on his way to work and taken to Delaney Hall.²

On August 1, 2026, Mr. Lopez Cornejo experienced what ICE described as a medical emergency. According to Rep. Rob Menendez, Mr. Lopez Cornejo was seen by nurse practitioners during his emergency because the sole physician who is responsible for all detainees at the facility was neither present nor on call.³ An ambulance was called sometime after 1 pm and transferred Mr. Lopez Cornejo to University Hospital in Newark around 2:40 pm.⁴ He was pronounced dead at 3:24 pm.⁵

During the July 22 hearing, Rep. Van Drew touted medical care at Delaney Hall and spoke about “people who had diabetes and never knew it... people with high blood pressure... people with a variety of illnesses and never knew it” being treated at Delaney Hall. According to his mother, Maria Cornejo, Mr. Lopez Cornejo was well aware of his medical conditions. He had been diagnosed with diabetes, high blood pressure, and epilepsy, all of which were being managed by medication for years.⁶ It is unclear whether Mr. Lopez Cornejo consistently received his prescriptions – medication his life depended on – during the six weeks he was detained at Delaney Hall. His family questions whether they were ever filled at all.⁷

Another individual’s tragic death is illustrative of the way people who depend on medication are treated while in ICE custody. Jesus Manuel Arenas Silva, a 45-year-old man, died on July 13 while being transferred from Irwin County Detention Center in Georgia.⁸ ICE’s standard policy requires every detained person to receive a full health assessment within 14 days of intake. Mr. Arenas Silva didn’t survive in custody long enough to reach the halfway point of that window. According to his sister, when ICE agents came for him, the family asked that he be allowed to bring his medications. Agents only let him take only one of the medications he needed.⁹

According to Mr. Lopez Cornejo’s brother, Mr. Lopez Cornejo told him that even to get Tylenol at Delaney Hall, one had to fill out forms and would not receive the medication for two or three days.¹⁰ Mr. Lopez Cornejo’s experience is not an outlier; these reports are the norm at Delaney Hall. Advocates and loved ones of those detained have long heard stories of individuals who have

² Id.

³ <https://www.nj.com/essex/2026/08/detainee-dies-at-newarks-delaney-hall-ice-facility-officials-say.html>

⁴ Id.

⁵ Id.

⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/04/nyregion/immigrant-death-delaney-hall.html>

⁷ Id.

⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jul/15/man-dies-georgia-ice-detention>

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ <https://newjerseymonitor.com/2026/08/04/plainfield-man-death-ice-custody/>

not received their medication, have been given the wrong dosage or the wrong medication altogether, or have been told to split medication because there is not enough to go around.¹¹

Sadly, in Mr. Lopez Cornejo's case, and in the case of so many others who have died in custody or were harmed by ICE, the trauma impacts multiple generations and communities.

"I don't have a way of healing this deep pain, this pain is too profound," Mr. Lopez Cornejo's mother, Maria Cornejo, said during an interview.

"I'm going to grow up without a father," said Ashley, Mr. Lopez Cornejo's 12-year-old daughter, overcome by tears. **"They didn't even let me see him one last time before he died."**¹²

Days before Mr. Lopez Cornejo's death, right around the time of this Subcommittee's hearing, another man detained at Delaney Hall began experiencing what ICE and GEO medical staff believed was a seizure, and University Hospital EMS took him to the hospital.¹³ According to Rep. Rob Menendez, ICE's Newark field office granted the man a temporary medical release, meaning he was technically no longer in ICE custody when he died. So, ICE did not report it as a death in its custody.

The story of the unnamed man who passed away shortly after being released from Delaney Hall bears a chilling resemblance to Prisciliano Trejo. Mr. Trejo was a 29-year-old man who was detained at the Stewart Detention Center in Georgia. He died on July 24 of acute leukemia. His family reported that despite severe symptoms like coughing blood and high levels of pain, the facility delayed necessary medical treatment for eight days. He slipped into a coma, was released by ICE to his family, and subsequently died.¹⁴

Both these deaths came after the ICE eliminated its requirement to report and review the deaths of formerly detained people that occur within 30 days of their release from federal custody, in line with the agency's broader pattern of obstructing transparency and oversight at every turn.

The mountain of evidence – of cruelty, abuse, and neglect within the immigration detention system – has been there for those willing and able to look. ICE continues to make it difficult for attorneys, journalists, health inspectors, and even family members of detained people to visit facilities. But Members of Congress have the oversight authority to do so.

The House Judiciary Committee – and the Oversight Subcommittee, which convened this hearing – has the responsibility of holding ICE accountable and ensuring that not another family

¹¹ Id.

¹² Id.

¹³ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/delaney-hall-detainee-death-not-reported-rob-menendez_n_6a724c2de4b02974827b8c78/amp

¹⁴ <https://www.newsweek.com/ice-detainee-diagnosed-with-leukemia-dies-after-transfer-from-detention-12271146>

mourns the untimely death of their loved one at the hands of an agency that operates with impunity. I appreciate that many Members of the Judiciary Committee have visited ICE facilities, spoken with detained individuals and their families, and have supported legislation to strengthen oversight, uphold rights, and hold ICE accountable. I urge *all* members of this subcommittee to:

- Conduct unannounced joint oversight visits to Delaney Hall and other ICE facilities, demanding to see all corners of each facility.
- Speak with detained individuals and those who were recently released.
- Hold ICE and its private prison partners accountable. Bring them to hearings before this committee. Make them answer – under oath – for what happens inside facilities they run on our tax dollars.
- Support and co-sponsor the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act.

Edwin Jovanny Lopez Cornejo's untimely death is the latest of the more than 50 deaths that have occurred in ICE facilities since the Trump administration took office in 2025. Their stories are not isolated incidents; they are the real, truthful narrative of what is happening in detention facilities across the nation. Unless facilities like Delaney Hall are closed, and ICE is held to account for these deaths in an urgent and meaningful way, more names will follow Mr. Lopez Cornejo's. I implore you to act.

I respectfully request that this letter, and the sources cited in it, be entered into the congressional record in full.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Sinha'.

Amol N. Sinha
Executive Director
ACLU of New Jersey

CC:

Hon. Jamie Raskin
Hon. Jasmine Crockett

Hon. Donald Norcross
Hon. Herb Conaway
Hon. Chris Smith
Hon. Josh Gottheimer
Hon. Frank Pallone
Hon. Thomas Kean, Jr.
Hon. Rob Menendez
Hon. Nellie Pou
Hon. LaMonica McIver
Hon. Analilia Mejia
Hon. Bonnie Watson Coleman

Hon. Cory Booker
Hon. Andy Kim