**Pocan\_Moore\_dodge\_ICE\_20250602.mp3**

[00:01:50] **Speaker 1** Recording in progress two minutes to couple more stragglers come in.

[00:02:28] **Speaker 2** Mark, I think there's a critical mass in Congresswoman when you're ready.

[00:02:33] **Speaker 3** Okay, I'm ready. Hi everybody. We wanna thank the press for joining us today. Representative Mark Pocan and I am Representative Gwen Moore represent the Greater Milwaukee area. We went today to visit the Dodge County Jail, which also has a contract with ICE to detain detainees under ICE. And Mark Percan and went. And I was particularly concerned about one detainee, Ramon Morales Reyes who, as you might all recall, was falsely accused of writing a threatening letter to Donald Trump. And I wasn't able to see him. Because they say that I would have had to give notice to actually be able to see him, although I was there under my prerogatives and privileges as a member of Congress for oversight and didn't really need an appointment, but I was unable to see them. But he was falsely accused of writing a letter threatening the life of the president, Donald Trump. Um, he is, uh, we spoke with his attorney and, uh he is supposed to have a hearing on Wednesday, uh, at a bond hearing on a Wednesday. He is absolutely no threat to the community. Uh, he has, uh, ties here. He has American children, wife. He works here. Uh and hopefully he will be bonded out of this facility on Wednesday. I found the, at least as much as the sheriff would allow us to see, it appeared to be clean, orderly, the prisoners were under lockdown because of our presence, but... At least from what we could see, it seemed to be in orderly well-run place. We did ask them particularly about medical and about nutrition and the ability to get exercise. They say that they're treated like other detainees who are not. Who are citizens, that they're able to earn privileges and to be able to go out and that they are screened for communicable diseases and that they have a decent diet. I definitely plan to return next Friday if, in fact, Mr. Morales Reyes is not bonded out, but hopefully he will be bonded out. But I will. I will notice them that I wanna come in and to be able to have a conversation with those detainees because I don't think that there are any employees from ICE who are there to be able to ask some of the critical questions that we had. And so Mark, I wanna turn it over to you to talk about some of those things that we definitely missed.

[00:06:17] **Speaker 4** Well, thank you, Gwen, and thanks, everybody, for being here. We have congressional prerogative to do an unannounced visit. In fact, I think a requirement really morally to do an unanounced visit to these facilities. Dodge County Jail is the only ICE facility in Wisconsin. So we went to go there. It took about an hour to get us into the process because I think, you know, it was unannoused and we gave him a letter from the Appropriations Committee from Rosa DeLora, who's the ranking Democratic member. That explains the law. They got the sheriff there. We had a conversation with him. But there are no ICE officials on premises. In fact, they come every three weeks is all they come. So, you know, the sheriff, to his credit, I think, did what he could do, which is give us a tour of the facility. But what he couldn't do is really answer the specific questions, many of which we had about ICE. We tried calling prior. Once we were there, We tried calling ICE so that we could get permission to talk to inmates because the sheriff said he wouldn't let us or take our staff in either. And we tried to get ahold of ICE. We went to the website for ICE and on the page where it talks about the Milwaukee field office, we called that number and it's disconnected. So we had no way to get hold of ICE because their number on their website is disconnected. So we did the tour. They do get good grades as a facility and I think Gwen and I would We both say that it. It met those standards. It's a very clean facility. It's the ICE detainees are treated, in fact, housed equally with county detainee that they have at the jail. And they do have a forced security classification explained to us, medical facilities, she showed us, library, where the food is prepared, et cetera. I think the real questions we have, though, were really with ICE. We don't even know how many detaines were there because the sheriff didn't wanna give us an answer unless he had the exact answer. I do feel, unfortunately, that he felt that we might have been trying to do a gotcha with him, and we weren't. He was nothing but, I think, respectful throughout the tour, but he didn't want to give us information. So, we know it's around a hundred, but we don't know more than that because ICE bluntly, while I'll explain in a second, also didn't return a call when we did get the right number. So we don t know where people are from within the ICE facility. He did tell us that people could come from worldwide. It's not like they're from Wisconsin. They could come from anywhere and ICE could bring them into this facility. So it doesn't mean that there are folks from Wisconsin who've been detained somehow in Wisconsin. We couldn't get any numbers on the makeup, the population makeup of the detainees, the reason for anyone being detained, and we couldn't talk to a detainee because the sheriff did want ICE permission to do that or advance notice, which is what Gwen talked about for her inmate. And then at the very end of the tour, the sheriff gave us the number of his contact that he had talked to while we were out waiting that hour to do the tour. And I left a message and I've yet to get a call back. And that was more than two hours ago. And they knew that we were just in the facility. This is the problem, right? ICE treats us all like we don't deserve to get information, even though we have oversight authority to do that, including the oversight authority to do the visit to Guadalajara. Did today. So, you know, I guess we did get a chance to see the facility. I do think the Dodge County facility does meet all the requirements that ICE puts out there for facilities. And to the sheriff's credit, I think he gave us a tour that was respectful and I think as inclusive as he felt he could. But ICE, without ICE either picking up a phone or not disconnecting Milwaukee number or being there on premises. We really couldn't get some of the answers that we would have liked to for going into a facility when I'll kick it back to you

[00:10:08] **Speaker 3** Well, thanks, Mark. I really agree with everything that you've said. The sheriff was accommodated us to the extent that he felt he had agency to do it. I was really pleased to hear that the agreements that county sheriffs in some counties of the state had with ICE does not include the sheriff's intervention, say, at a traffic stop or something, where they would arrest on behalf of of ICE, which is something that I needed some clarification as to what that agreement entailed. You know, just switching topics a little bit, I was also concerned about another young woman who lives in Milwaukee, Yesenia Ruano, who of course has been told that she needs to self-deport by tomorrow. And literally, I spoke with her attorney today and her attorney Mark Christopher said literally while we were on the phone, they were at that moment filing a stay because in fact, they found that she has an ongoing active application is in process with the US immigration service for a T visa. That's a visa for victims of trafficking. She has ties to the community. She has US born twin daughters, nine years old. She's an exceptional asset to school district where she works. Not a threat at all to the Community, not the rapists and drug traffickers and dealers that we have heard about. We just want some, we want people to know that as Americans, you have due process when you're on our soil, whether you're, despite your citizenship status, due process is part of what we expect under our constitution. And so that stay has been filed today for an emergency stay because she should at least be able. We should be able to wait, you know, deported or not, for her to have the hearing to which she's entitled, her TV says, you now, she had a brother killed by gang members when she was there. And they tried to force her and traffic her. So we are hoping that our law, rule of law, prevails over. The zealous activities of ice.

[00:13:08] **Speaker 4** I think we can open it up for questions. Matt, I don't know the best process to do this. I don't know.

[00:13:14] **Speaker 1** People go.

[00:13:15] **Speaker 4** Unmute and say something or how we should do that. I think maybe raise hands. There's a button to raise hands Okay, if people can do the raise hand option and if not, just unmute yourself and say your name and outlet, please. And Gwen or I can try to answer. Todd Richmond, I see your hand.

[00:13:34] **Speaker 2** Yeah, can you guys hear me? Two questions Mark and Gwen. So you were you able to visually observe any ICE detainees or were you not certain that they were ICE detainees and who you were looking at if you were allowed to look at anybody and Why did you not pursue these questions with the Chicago ICE headquarters, which pretty much is control of the region.

[00:14:01] **Speaker 4** So we did, they locked down part of the area so we could actually walk into the facility that people were living. They did open up an empty cell for us to see the cell and the conditions there. But we did see others in another part where we were just in the central area where we did see people and they were at their tables or doing whatever, sleeping, etc. So we did see that in their intermix. So it's ICE detainees, as long with county jail detainee. So we couldn't tell you exactly who was who, but we certainly couldn't talk to anyone because that wasn't allowed. Your second question though, Todd, was around Chicago. And that's the number we were given. And so after the Milwaukee number was disconnected, we couldn't get through prior, the number the sheriff gave us that he talked to. While he was opening it up for us to come in, because I think he didn't know the house rules and he had to check in on that, that's the person that did not return my call. And I'm still waiting for a return call from him. So I couldn't ask any specifics about the people who are actually at the facility.

[00:15:10] **Speaker 3** I this is Gwen Moore. I do think that on the staff level, we've been able to reach the Chicago office and we plan to do that to arrange a visit where we can actually speak to Ramon Morales Reyes if he does not receive if he's not bonded out. And we spoke with Mr. Morales Reyes' attorney. Has connections as well. So we plan to pursue the connections with Chicago and make sure that they respond at least. I'll do my, I'll in good faith make an appointment so that I can show up a week from today.

[00:16:01] **Speaker 4** Nick Bohr.

[00:16:06] **Speaker 1** Thank you. I have a question for congresswoman Moore. You said that you would like to visit and speak with the detainees or some of them. What is it specifically you would ask them?

[00:16:19] **Speaker 3** Well, I certainly would want to make sure that I had a translator there with me. I do have that asset in my office. I wanna make sure that they're okay, make sure they're treated well. I wanna to make that they believe that they are getting the kind of representation that they deserve. The sheriff told us, at least anecdotally, that they had pretty much decided that he was not guilty of writing that letter to Donald Trump. But he was, you know, he said, look, I'm not, all I do is pick people up, transport them and detain them. You know, I don't have anything to do with the adjudications of their case. So I can't tell you what's gonna happen or what's not gonna happen. So I've spoken with the attorney after I made the visit. And he shared with me that they're gonna be trying very, very hard. And we're gonna weigh in and say that he is, to the extent that we know anything about it, they've already determined that he could not be, that he was a victim, in fact, of a crime, which is how, you know, ICE got sights on him, and that the perpetrator of the crime, you now, is perhaps. We don't know, perhaps responsible for that awful correspondence and threat against the president's life. So I wanna make sure that his well-being is being dealt with.

[00:18:08] **Speaker 4** Yeah, Nick, part of it is, you know, the arrogance that we've seen from ICE so far this year. The arrogance of someone actually not calling back a member who calls on his personal cell to the person that just got done talking to the sheriff as we toured a facility. You know, sometimes we're finding, I had a constituent who actually was down at a court in Miami, and as a sentencing, as they were found their case for asylum was found not valid. ICE was waiting in the hallway. We know of the family that was speaking Spanish at a mall in Milwaukee and they're Puerto Rican, they're citizens of the United States. So there's a lot of reasons you want to talk to folks who are detained to make sure that they're actually there for a legitimate reason. And I wouldn't expect the sheriff to know that. That's not his responsibility, but it is ICE's. And if they're only showing up every three weeks to do anything and they don't even answer to members of Congress, that's exactly why we have to do visits like this and why we have to be able to talk with people who are there. Next up, I have Ava.

[00:19:11] **Speaker 5** Yes. Hi. Nice to meet you. I'm Eva Wen. I am a reporter with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. I wrote the story about Ramon Morales Reyes. And I was wondering, what are your thoughts on the Department of Homeland Security kind of issuing this public statement that accused Morales-Reyes of writing that threatening letter and then investigators kind of next day deciding that it was not him?

[00:19:37] **Speaker 3** Well, like I said, you know, when zeal supplants the rule of law, we have to be concerned, because that's why we have due process. It's why we have rules of engagement. It is why the sheriff of Dodge County says he doesn't stop people on a traffic stop, you know, and then try to determine what their immigration status is. We got, we got rules about the way this stuff is supposed to go. And it's frightening because it, you know, it's Morales Reyes today and it's us tomorrow.

[00:20:16] **Speaker 4** And the real problem, Eva, I mean, also on this is if they admitted someone didn't do anything, why are they still being held, right? That's the problem, you know, just because people had tattoos, they were sent to El Salvador, even to tattoos that had nothing to do with gangland. I mean this is the lawless behavior of ICE that we're seeing all too often. And what we merely wanted to do is get a chance to talk to the folks who are there. But if you announce it, they can take away people that maybe they know. They shouldn't have put away. That's why we have the power through Congress to go in and do an unannounced visit. The problem is, since ICE doesn't actually care about the facility very much, they seem to have closed down the Milwaukee office or at least the phone number for the Milwaukee Office. And now you only have Chicago office that come in once every three weeks. How do we get those answers? And it's much like we're seeing before Congress, even from the Secretary of Homeland Security, they're not providing us answers. And that's the real problem with this administration right now is that, On a regular basis, whether it be the Doge commission, there's no phone number on the website, no email. We tried to get contacts that we couldn't figure out how to. We tried every congressional liaison we had. We called the White House. They asked us to call back in 15 minutes. And then we got a call again, finally to get a contact within Doge. This is not run like the federal government. This is run like an authoritarian society. And ICE is acting like they're the personal police for somebody right now, rather than the way they should be. So I think what we learned today. Was, again, there's still no accountability. ICE is acting like they are somehow above the law, above lawmakers, and the best we could do is have a local sheriff show us the facility, but we knew he couldn't answer more questions. And to his credit, he said he couldn t answer more question, but ICE needs to at least be responsive to members of Congress.

[00:22:07] **Speaker 5** And what do you think his arrest, Morata Strayer's arrest, what impact would that have on the communities that you represent and public safety and everything?

[00:22:19] **Speaker 3** Well, I think that it really, again, speaks to how the United States is showing up in the world to stray this far from the rule of law, to literally say that the, you know, because it's moving way away from the message that they put out there that we're deporting people who are dangerous, people who belong to criminal gangs, people who and in order to get their numbers up or keep the momentum up, when you have to snatch a much needed school support person, and they're desperate for these people in the classroom, a mother of two U.S. Citizens, when she becomes your target, that's the canary in the coal mine that really demonstrates that we're running way. Out of range with an overshooting our goals. And it should be a wake-up call because I think that even conservative communities are saying, wait a minute, we're not looking for you to pluck productive members of our society, working people out just on a traffic stop or accidentally stumbling upon their immigration status that we want some rules in place. That are in fact going to make us feel safer. And that, you know, because that goes beyond this, it goes to workers, parents, you knows, grandmas who are here in this country and dreamers.

[00:24:08] **Speaker 4** Other questions? I don't see hands up. If someone is not seeing that function on their screen, you could also unmute your mic and just ask the question. If not, we thank people for your time today. Again, we're still gonna pursue the questions we had. How many folks are there? Give us some idea of the demographics. How many senior citizens, are there any pregnant women? Are there any transgender inmates? Are there are any juveniles? They've said no. And I believe that is the one answer we did get definitively because they only house adult ICE detainees. But we have a lot of other questions and we wanna know. This is the only ICE facility in Wisconsin. In Dodge County and we felt it was our duty to do that, Gwen.

[00:25:02] **Speaker 3** Yeah, again, thank you for gathering the press. It's really important for us to let all of these institutions to know that we're not saying that their mission is not important to detain people. But we want to make sure that everybody who is detained in the United States is here with due process. They're being treated like human beings. They're getting medical care, nutrition. I was very concerned about whether or not people were just being fed all carbs, given the high propensity of diabetes, for example, among black and brown people. And just wondering if they're, you know, because their budgets from ICE don't seem to be commensurate with what it might cost to house those prisoners. And so we didn't get him to talk about the dirt. Of any budget to really take care of people in a way that might. Some standard of care that we think would be equitable. But we're going to continue to work. I am going to make sure that I reach out to the Chicago office so I don't have any more questions or problems. I will make an appointment to go there.

[00:26:36] **Speaker 4** So thanks everybody, appreciate you being with us and any other questions you can send to either of us. And again, thanks for availability on short notice.