

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 24, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Nebraska Avenue Complex
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

We write to express deep concern about the deployment of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) federal agents to the Seattle, Washington area without the consent or request of state or local government. As people across the country continue to exercise their First Amendment rights, we urge you to immediately withdraw the deployment, center de-escalation tactics, and ensure that deployments of DHS resources do not occur without the request, consent, and knowledge of state and local officials.

It is our understanding that Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and Governor Jay Inslee's office received repeated personal assurances from you and your office that there would be no deployment of additional federal personnel to Seattle. This last assurance came on Thursday, July 23, 2020. Despite that assurance, and no intervening request for federal assistance from the Seattle Mayor or Governor, on that same day, July 23, 2020, King County and the Port of Seattle reported the arrival of a DHS aircraft. DHS agents exited the aircraft and drove away in an unmarked vehicle. This is a clear departure from the communication that the Mayor and Governor received earlier that same day.

Over the last week, we have watched in horror at how DHS officials have responded to largely peaceful protests in Portland, Oregon with escalation. We believe that these deployments of federal agents and their tactics will only serve to escalate and prolong protests and result in more violence. The deployment of tear gas during a pandemic, picking up protesters using unmarked vehicles without arresting them or stating a basis for arrest, shooting clearly-identified journalists, protestors, and legal observers with impact munitions is unacceptable. The Department's actions in Portland have been challenged on constitutional grounds in multiple lawsuits, and must not be replicated in Seattle, or anywhere in the United States.

In light of the apparent deployment of federal officials in Seattle, we request that you immediately set up a briefing to provide answers to the following questions:


1. What prompted DHS to deploy federal agents to Washington state and who was involved in this decision?
2. How many DHS officials were deployed to Seattle that are not there on a permanent basis?

3. For any official deployed, specify the agency, agent-type, where the official was deployed from, and the purpose of such deployment.
4. What direction, both written and oral, have the federal agents received about their deployment to Seattle? Specify any guidance as to where they will be deployed within the area, any guidance as to the wearing of official insignia, or actions they will take within the area.
5. Was there any communication between the White House and DHS about the deployment of federal officials to Washington?


In closing, we must stress that the Department of Homeland Security act in accordance with the Constitution of the United States, and that where the law and discretionary authority meet, you use your judgement in the best interests of the American people. This moment calls for de-escalation and prudent coordination with local and state law enforcement to ensure an effective and safe response that maintains the American people's right to protest and be free from unlawful searches and seizures.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,




PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Member of Congress




PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator



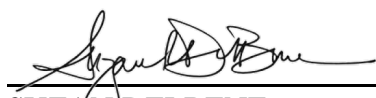
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