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THE BUDGET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2025

Dr. Joseph V. Cuffari
Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Dr. Cuffari:

I write to request that the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General investigate the recent death by suicide of a noncitizen that occurred on March 29, 2025, in Yuma Arizona while the individual was in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody. I also urge a broader review of how CBP generally conducts and logs its welfare checks on all individuals in its custody. Any death is a tragedy, and it is very concerning that it appears CBP protocols were not followed in this case.

According to CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), the now-deceased individual was in Border Patrol custody in Yuma Arizona from March 27 to March 29. On March 27, Border Patrol detention logs noted that Border Patrol personnel conducted five welfare checks, but CBP OPR was unable to verify that those checks occurred.

On March 29, Border Patrol's detention logs note there were four different welfare checks or meals provided to the woman, however Border Patrol later admitted to CBP OPR that they "did not conduct the welfare checks documented in the detention logs." This is most concerning, given that CBP OPR's timeline and review of the camera footage shows that the cameras recorded when and how the individual died by suicide, but that CBP personnel did not notice this for over an hour.

The lack of monitoring of cameras or conducting welfare checks that were logged into CBP's system is deeply concerning and raises real questions about whether agents are adhering to CBP's own policies and protocols. That is why it is imperative that you not only conduct an investigation into this incident, but also examine this issue more broadly.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Pramila Jayapal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pramila" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Jayapal".

Pramila Jayapal

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement