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**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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WESTERN HEMISPHERE SUBCOMMITTEE

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE STRATEGIC
COMPETITION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY**

April 27, 2026

The Honorable Orice Williams Brown
Acting Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Acting Comptroller General Williams Brown:

I write to request technical assistance from the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Specifically, I request that GAO compile and provide to the Subcommittee available data and information regarding the extent to which the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been directed to detail employees, reassign personnel, or otherwise redirect agency resources to support U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) hiring, operational, and other immigration and border security activities. I am not requesting a full audit or report at this time. Rather, I ask that GAO provide factual data and documentation in the form of technical assistance to the Subcommittee to help inform our oversight responsibilities.

FEMA's core statutory mission is to support citizens and first responders in preparing for, protecting against, responding to, recovering from, and mitigating all hazards. The Subcommittee has direct jurisdiction over FEMA and its disaster preparedness and response functions. It is therefore within the Subcommittee's oversight mandate to examine any actions that may alter FEMA's organizational capacity, staffing structure, or resource availability in ways that could affect the agency's ability to carry out its core mission.

Recent press accounts and publicly available information raise significant concerns about DHS's use of FEMA personnel and resources for purposes outside FEMA's statutory mission. In August 2025, multiple credible news outlets reported that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) directed more than 100 FEMA employees—primarily from FEMA's Human Resources and Security Offices—to accept immediate 90-day detail assignments to ICE headquarters in Washington, D.C., and to ICE field offices nationwide. According to reporting by The Washington Post, The Hill, Rolling Stone, and others, the affected employees were notified via email with the subject line "Management Directed Reassignment Effective August 5, 2025" and were informed that declining the reassignment could result in removal from Federal service. The stated purpose of the detail was to support ICE's initiative to hire up to 10,000 new ICE agents authorized under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

These reassignments occurred during the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season, when FEMA's HR and security personnel typically perform critical functions including hiring temporary disaster response workers, vetting local contractors, and securing agency facilities and operations. At the time of the reassignments, FEMA was already operating with approximately 2,000 fewer employees than its authorized workforce due to attrition and earlier reductions-in-force. Former FEMA officials and state emergency managers publicly raised concerns that the transfers left the agency understaffed at a critical period, potentially hampering its ability to respond to major natural disasters.

In October 2025, additional reporting indicated that DHS directed hundreds more employees across multiple non-border DHS components—beyond FEMA alone—to accept reassignments to border security and immigration enforcement functions, or face potential termination. These broader patterns suggest a systemic strategy within DHS to leverage the personnel and administrative capacity of agencies such as FEMA to advance immigration enforcement objectives, regardless of those agencies' statutory missions or operational needs.

To assist the Subcommittee in its oversight of FEMA, I respectfully request that GAO provide technical assistance by compiling and transmitting to the Subcommittee available data and documentation responsive to the following questions:

- How many FEMA employees have been detailed, reassigned, or otherwise directed to support ICE or other DHS immigration or border security components since January 20, 2025? What were their positions, office affiliations, and the stated duration of their assignments?
- What specific functions were FEMA detailees directed to perform at ICE or other immigration-related components, including any role in ICE hiring, screening, vetting, or security functions?
- What direction, memoranda, or formal authority did DHS or FEMA leadership rely upon in making these reassignment decisions, and were any required administrative or legal processes followed?
- What was the impact of these reassignments on FEMA's disaster preparedness and response capacity, including any assessments conducted by DHS or FEMA of operational risk associated with the transfers?
- Were any FEMA funds, contracts, or appropriated resources used in connection with the support provided to ICE or other immigration enforcement activities?

Please work with Subcommittee staff to determine the best method and format to communicate this data and information as quickly as possible.

I look forward to your prompt response. If you have any questions, please contact Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Democratic staff at (202) 226-8776.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Stanton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "S".

Greg Stanton
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Public Buildings,
Economic Development, and
Emergency Management