



Jon Ossoff
U.S. SENATOR FOR GEORGIA

THE ABUSE OF PREGNANT WOMEN & CHILDREN IN U.S. IMMIGRATION DETENTION

U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff has launched an investigation into human rights abuses in U.S. immigration detention. Credibly reported or confirmed events include deaths in custody, physical and sexual abuse, mistreatment of pregnant women, mistreatment of children, inadequate medical care, overcrowding and unsanitary living conditions, inadequate food or water, exposure to extreme temperatures, denial of access to attorneys, and family separations.

Prepared by Senator Jon Ossoff

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Executive Summary

U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff has launched an investigation into human rights abuses in U.S. immigration detention. Since January 20, 2025, Senator Ossoff's investigation has received or identified 510 credible reports of human rights abuse against individuals held in Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and Health and Human Services (HHS) facilities, county jails, and federal buildings across 25 U.S. states and Puerto Rico, at U.S. military bases (including Guantánamo Bay in Cuba and Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti), and on chartered deportation flights. Among these reports are 41 credible reports of physical and sexual abuse of individuals in U.S. immigration detention, 14 credible reports of mistreatment of pregnant women, and 18 credible reports of mistreatment of children.

Credibly reported or confirmed events to date include deaths in custody, physical and sexual abuse, mistreatment of pregnant women, mistreatment of children, inadequate medical care, overcrowding and unsanitary living conditions, inadequate food or water, exposure to extreme temperatures, denial of access to attorneys, and family separations.

Report

I. Background

In January 2025, U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff launched an investigation into human rights abuses in U.S. immigration detention. The Senator's staff has interviewed and received credible reports of abuse from dozens of witnesses and sources, including correctional staff, law enforcement officials, attorneys, detainees and their family members, doctors, and nurses, conducted site inspections of DHS-, HHS-, and BOP-administrated facilities; and analyzed public reports and court records. Additionally, the Senator's staff has interviewed 46 detainees to date, including during site inspections at El Paso Service Processing Center (SPC) and South Texas Family Residential Center ("Dilley") in Texas and at Stewart Detention Center and FCI Atlanta in Georgia. The Senator's staff also inspected the South Texas Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Processing Center and Compass Connections San Antonio Shelter for unaccompanied children. Obstruction of Congressional oversight by the Department of Homeland Security has been an impediment to site visits and interviews with detainees.

Senator Ossoff has sent oversight letters to DHS, the Department of Justice (DOJ), and Department of Defense (DoD), demanding further information about immigration detention at Guantánamo Bay and in federal prisons, threats by the Administration to lower Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention standards, and the reestablishment of family detention. The Senator continues to investigate DHS operations to ensure transparency and to prevent human rights abuses in U.S. government custody.

To date, the Senator's office has received and identified 510 credible reports of human rights abuse against immigrants since January 20, including those described in this publication. This is an active and ongoing investigation. The Senator's staff acknowledges that the credible reports received or identified are not exhaustive and, as part of this ongoing investigation, staff will continue to analyze public reports and records, to interview detainees, attorneys, and experts, and to conduct site inspections.

II. Investigation Findings

Through interviews, analysis of public reports, and site inspections, the Senator’s staff has received or identified 41 credible reports of physical and sexual abuse, 14 credible reports of mistreatment of pregnant women, and 18 credible reports of mistreatment of children in immigration detention.

A. REPORTED ABUSES

Physical and Sexual Abuse: The Senator’s staff has received or identified 41 credible reports that individuals have been physically and/or sexually abused while in DHS custody. Detainees have reported being beaten by detention facility staff and placed in solitary confinement after reporting their abuse.

- Attorneys have reported that a client held at the El Paso Service Processing Center in El Paso, TX was “slammed against the ground, handcuffed, and taken outside . . . for stepping out of line in the dining hall.” Guards reportedly nearly broke his wrists.
- Public reports describe at least two 911 calls from the Adelanto ICE Processing Center in California referencing reported sexual assaults or threats of sexual assaults.¹ At the South Texas ICE Processing Center, at least four emergency calls since January have reportedly referenced sexual abuse.²
- Attorneys have reported that staff at one CBP facility forced at least 7 detainees into “stress positions” as punishment for “laughing and conversing.”
- Additionally, under a 2025 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), DHS can place detainees in BOP prisons if local DHS facilities are overcrowded.³ Although detainees are required to be housed separately from prison inmates, public reports describe a detainee being placed in a prison dormitory for “behavioral management,” where they were reportedly assaulted by an inmate.⁴

¹ Dhruv Mehrotra and Dell Cameron, ‘They’re Not Breathing’: Inside the Chaos of ICE Detention Center 911 Calls, WIRED (Jun. 25, 2025), <https://www.wired.com/story/ice-detention-center-911-emergencies/>.

² *Id.*

³ Inter-Agency Agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and U.S. Dept of Homeland Security (DHS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25536309-agreement-between-ice-and-bop-re-detaining-immigrants-at-federal-prisons/>.

⁴ Ethan Weinstein, The feds are increasingly relying on Vermont’s prisons for immigration detention, VT Digger (Apr. 3, 2025), <https://vtdigger.org/2025/04/03/the-feds-are-increasingly-relying-on-vermonts-prisons-for-immigration-detention/>.

- Detainees held at Miami’s Federal Detention Center reported that they were left in a “small room” for “hours on end” with only one toilet and no access to food, water, or medical attention.⁵ When they flooded the toilet in protest, officers reportedly threw “flash-bang” grenades into the room and “shot at the men with what appeared to be pellets or rubber bullets.” Officers further reportedly “handcuffed them with zip-ties that cut into their wrists,” when detainees requested food, water, and medication.⁶

Mistreatment of Pregnant Women: The Senator’s staff has received or identified 14 credible reports that pregnant women have been mistreated in DHS custody, including not receiving adequate medical care and timely checkups, not receiving urgent care when needed, being denied snacks and adequate meals, and being forced to sleep on the floor due to overcrowding. According to public reports, emergency call records from U.S. immigration detention facilities show that multiple facilities have reported serious pregnancy complications.⁷

- An anonymous agency official reported seeing pregnant women sleeping on floors in overcrowded intake cells.
- The partner of a woman in DHS custody reported to the Senator’s staff that the woman was pregnant and bled for days before facility staff would take her to a hospital. Once she was there, she was reportedly left in a room, alone, to miscarry without water or medical assistance, for over 24 hours. In another case, a detainee reportedly “nearly miscarried twice” while in ICE custody.⁸
- In an interview with the Senator’s staff, a pregnant detainee described repeatedly requesting medical attention and being told to “just drink water” instead of receiving an exam.
- Attorneys have reported that their pregnant clients have waited “weeks” to see a doctor in DHS custody, and that their scheduled appointments were canceled.

5 Claire Healy, Syra Ortiz Blanes, and Verónica Egui Brito, ‘Some cry all day.’ ICE detainees face harsh conditions in Miami federal facility, Miami Herald (Jun. 7, 2025), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article308076975.html>.

6 *Id.*

7 Mehrotra and Cameron, *supra* note 2.

8 Bobbi-Jean Misick, Congress members visit detained Columbia, Tufts students in Louisiana ICE lockups, Louisiana Illuminator (Apr. 22, 2025), <https://lailluminator.com/2025/04/22/louisiana-ice-2/>.

Mistreatment of Children: The Senator’s staff has received or identified 18 credible reports that children as young as two years old, including U.S. citizens, have been mistreated in DHS custody. Three of these children reportedly experienced severe medical issues while in detention and were denied adequate medical treatment.

- One attorney reported that a U.S. citizen child with severe medical issues was hospitalized three times while in CBP custody with her non-citizen mother, and that when the girl began vomiting blood, the mother begged for medical attention. A CBP guard reportedly responded, “Just give the girl a cracker.”
- A 10-year-old U.S. citizen who was recovering from brain surgery was detained with her family. She was reportedly denied access to necessary follow-up care and faces continued brain swelling and speech and mobility difficulties.⁹
- A four-year-old was reportedly detained while receiving ongoing treatment for metastatic cancer.¹⁰ This child was reportedly deported without the ability to consult a doctor.¹¹

⁹ Nicole Acevedo, *Deported family of U.S. citizen girl recovering from brain surgery alleges civil rights abuses in new complaint*, NBC News (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/deported-family-us-citizen-girl-brain-surgery-alleges-abuse-rcna196705>; Texas Civil Rights Project, *Complaint RE: Detention and Forced Relocation to Mexico of U.S. Citizen Children During a Medical Emergency* (Mar. 17, 2025), https://www.txcivilrights.org/files/ugd/9fea3a_ac52f88df-10742f99362e3c14b452213.pdf.

¹⁰ Dakin Andone, *3 children who are US citizens — including one with cancer — deported with their mothers, lawyers and advocacy groups say*, CNN (Apr. 30, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/27/us/children-us-citizens-deported-honduras/index.html>.

¹¹ Madeline Halpert, *Three U.S. citizen children, one with cancer, deported to Honduras, lawyers say*, BBC (Apr. 28, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g8yj2n33yo>.

B. REPORTED LOCATIONS OF ABUSES

So far, staff has received or identified credible reports of physical and sexual abuse and mistreatment of pregnant women and children held in facilities in 13 U.S. states. Figure 1 below shows how many credible reports the Senator's staff has received or identified, by location.

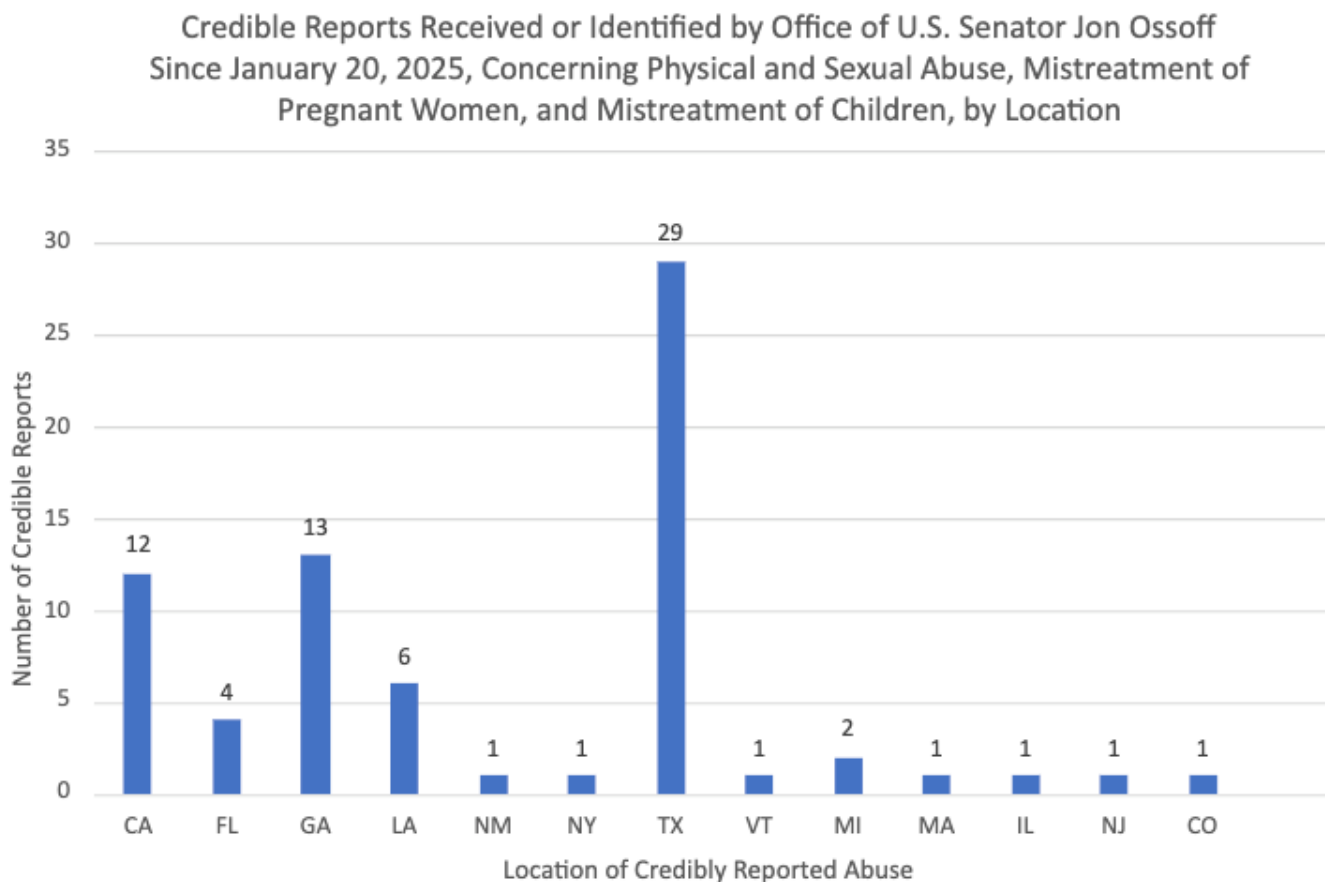


Figure 1

Most credible reports of physical and sexual abuse, mistreatment of pregnant women, and mistreatment of children originate at facilities in Texas (29 reports), Georgia (13 reports), and California (12 reports).

C. REPORTED FACILITY ADMINISTRATORS

So far, staff has received or identified credible reports of physical and sexual abuse and mistreatment of pregnant women and children among detainees held in DHS, BOP, and HHS custody. Figure 2 below shows how many credible reports staff has received or identified, by facility administrator.

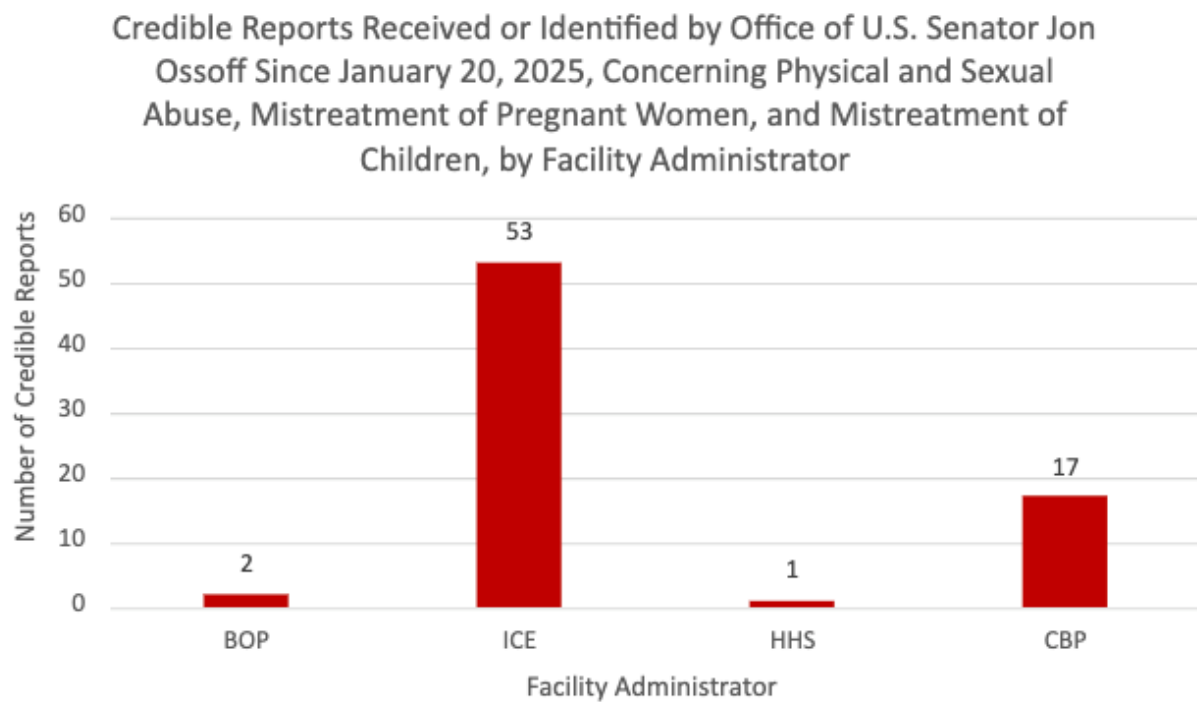


Figure 2