



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ELCA clergy of the greater Iowa Quad Cities Area

January 28, 2026

Dear Senators Grassley and Ernst,

As you know, this week, the Senate will vote on the FY26 Homeland Security Appropriations Act that recently passed the House of Representatives. The bill funds the operations of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), agencies whose aggressive presence in Minnesota in recent weeks led to the killing of Renee Nicole Good and Alex Pretti, the detention of children, refugees, and U.S. citizens, and caused both widespread fear and faith-filled resistance.

Accountability and oversight over the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are desperately needed. We urge you to exercise leadership in the Senate. We ask you to not support any additional funding for immigration enforcement. Furthermore, we ask you to advocate for accountability and oversight for DHS.

As members and pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), our faith teaches that when one person suffers, we all suffer. We ask you to protect our neighbors by prioritizing accountability for ICE, not additional funding for actions that are harming our communities.

The six ELCA bishops in the state of Minnesota wrote recently: "We know that all our neighbors bear the image of God... We also know there are voices around us that challenge the truth of who we are and who our neighbors are. It is our fervent hope that every one of us would remain deeply rooted in our identity as God's beloved."

In Christ,

Rev. Leah Holloway-Nilsen, Calamus Lutheran Parish, Calamus

Rev. Dr. Carrie Lewis La Plante, Faith Lutheran Church, Eldridge

Rev. Heather Geest, Faith Lutheran Church, Eldridge

Rev. Rodney Underwood, Gloria Dei Lutheran and St. Paul Episcopal, Durant

Rev. Stephanie Wood, Grace Lutheran Church, Davenport

Rev. Kirsten Lee, Grace Lutheran Church, Davenport

Rev. Joel Nau, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bettendorf

Vicar Bryce Hewlett, St. James Lutheran Church, Bettendorf

Rev. Janine Johnson, St. Mark Lutheran Church, Davenport

Rev. Sara Olson-Smith, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Davenport

Rev. Katy Warren, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Davenport

Rev. Madeleine Tyler, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Davenport

Rev. Stephen Nilsen, Trinity Lutheran Church, Pleasant Valley

Rev. Clark Olson-Smith, Zion Lutheran Church, Davenport

Rev. Travis M. Fisher-King, On leave from call, Davenport

1. Person 1:

Start by thanking the staffers for their time. Introduce yourself & colleagues (we are clergy with The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America...)

2. Person 2:

Ask the first two questions below & any follow up questions

3. Person 3:

Ask the second two questions below & any follow up questions

4. Person 4:

Ask the staffers: We urge you to exercise leadership in the Senate. We ask you to not support any additional funding for immigration enforcement. Furthermore, we ask you to advocate for accountability and oversight for DHS.

Possible Questions to ask the Senators:

1. What is the Senator's view on ICE actions in Minneapolis?
2. What would it take for the Senator to reconsider funding ICE?
3. What kind of oversight of DHS is the Senate exercising now?
4. What committees, etc, does the Senator sit on that could exercise such accountability?