

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Ron Johnson
“Medical Mistreatment of Women in ICE Detention”
November 15, 2022

As submitted to the record:

This hearing is a culmination of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations’ (“PSI”) 18-month bipartisan investigation of allegations of medical abuse against immigration detainees held at the Irwin County Detention Center (“ICDC”). I want to first thank the Chairman and his staff for his leadership on this important investigation.

PSI’s investigation stemmed from a September 2020 whistleblower complaint alleging that an off-site OB-GYN conducted mass, unauthorized, hysterectomies on immigration detainees housed at ICDC. Thankfully, PSI’s investigation found that allegation was not true. The doctor in question, Dr. Mahendra Amin, performed two hysterectomies on ICDC detainees between 2017 and 2020 and both were medically necessary.

The Subcommittee did find, however, that Dr. Amin performed a significantly higher number of invasive OB-GYN procedures on female detainees compared to other physicians that treated immigrant detainees across the country. PSI attempted to speak directly to Dr. Amin but he asserted his Fifth Amendment right. Due to this, PSI sought advice from a medical expert who reviewed the files of detainees housed at ICDC. PSI’s expert found that many of the procedures were unnecessary, and that Dr. Amin frequently rushed to surgeries when non-surgical

options were more appropriate. I thank Dr. Cherouny for his assistance with this investigation and his testimony today.

I want to be clear: The findings and recommendations of this investigation are only about Dr. Amin's care of detainees at ICDC. Nothing in the subcommittee's investigation should be interpreted to advocate for or support the end of immigration detention. Federal law requires the detention of aliens in certain removal proceedings. Secretary Mayorkas cancelled the contract with ICDC in May of 2021. All immigrant detainees were removed from the facility as of September 2021. The Biden Administration's widespread failures to enforce immigration laws have been a driving force behind the record nearly 2.4 million apprehensions at the Southwest border last fiscal year. In order to stop the unsustainable flow of illegal migration, the federal government should use all of the tools at its disposal to enforce immigration laws, including detention.

PSI's investigation identified concerning practices of an off-site provider at this facility and made a series of recommendations for Immigrations and Customs Enforcement to implement to improve the provision of health care of immigrant detainees. I thank the witnesses for their testimony and look forward to discussing these issues at today's hearing.