

May 16, 2025

Andrew Levy
Chief Executive Officer
Avelo Airlines
12 Greenway Plaza
Suite 400
Houston, Texas 77046

Dear Mr. Levy,

On April 7, 2025, it was reported that Avelo Airlines entered into a long-term contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to fly domestic and international deportation flights and had begun recruiting flight attendants to serve on those flights.¹ On May 12, 2025, Avelo reportedly flew its first deportation flight for ICE.² Given the Trump Administration’s mission to indiscriminately deport our nation’s immigrants—without due process, in violation of the Constitution and federal immigration law, and, in some cases, in defiance of court orders—it is deeply disturbing that Avelo has determined that its partnership with ICE is “too valuable not to pursue.”³

The Trump Administration has used airline contractors to carry out hasty deportations without judicial review. The Administration used an ICE contractor to fly Venezuelan immigrants to El Salvador, persisting with the flights even though a federal judge ordered the planes returned to the United States.⁴ That judge has found probable cause to hold the government in contempt for violating his order, noting that the planes touched down in Honduras after the judge issued his order for their return and remained in Honduras for several hours before proceeding to El Salvador. The Administration’s hastiness has caused further error and harm.⁵ The Administration deported Kilmar Abrego Garcia, despite a court order that prohibited his removal to El Salvador.⁶ The Supreme Court unanimously held that the government must facilitate Mr. Garcia’s “release

¹ Susan Haigh, *Budget Airline Avelo to Fly Deportation Flights for ICE from Arizona*, AP (Apr. 8, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/avelo-airline-deportation-ice-arizona-463bc3e5c65b002c0cca9976be066df6>.

² Niraj Chokshi, *Avelo Airlines Faces Backlash for Aiding Trump’s Deportation Campaign*, N.Y. TIMES (May 12, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/12/business/trump-deportation-flights-avelo-airlines.html>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Memorandum Opinion, *J.G.G. v. Trump*, No. 1:25-cv-00766 (D.D.C. Apr. 16, 2025), <https://assets.aclu.org/live/uploads/2025/03/JGG-Contempt-Opinion.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Victoria Bisset & Vivian Ho, *The Deportation Standoff Sending the U.S. Toward a Constitutional Crisis*, WASH. POST (Apr. 15, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2025/04/15/kilmar-abrego-garcia-deported-el-salvador-maryland/>.

from custody in El Salvador;”⁷ yet, the Trump Administration refuses to do so.⁸ President Trump has even suggested deporting U.S. citizens convicted of certain unspecified crimes to be imprisoned abroad—a suggestion that is blatantly unconstitutional.⁹ By partnering with ICE, Avelo risks being complicit with the Administration’s illegal actions.

Avelo is also reportedly closing its base at Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport and ending certain West Coast routes to accommodate its new contract with ICE.¹⁰ The growth of Avelo’s commercial flight service has been subsidized by the State of Connecticut, which has granted Avelo an exemption from aviation fuel taxes and a guarantee against losses of up to \$2 million.¹¹ Avelo’s apparent decision to shrink its commercial service to accommodate its ICE contract is a betrayal of Connecticut’s support and of Avelo’s customers.

On April 8, 2025, Connecticut Attorney General William Tong sent you a letter asking for more information on your agreement with ICE.¹² You refused to provide a copy of your contract with ICE,¹³ and your response, in which you state that Avelo is committed to “the rule of law,” indicates that you fail to grasp the scope of the Trump Administration’s illegal actions. As Senators from Connecticut and California—states in which Avelo is based—and in furtherance of our oversight responsibilities as members of the Senate Judiciary Committee as well as your stated value of “being open, honest, and transparent,”¹⁴ we write to seek information on your partnership with ICE. Please provide your responses to the following questions by May 30, 2025:

1. Do you have policies and procedures in place to confirm the immigration status of individuals you are deporting?
2. If you become aware that an individual aboard your deportation flight cannot or should not be removed from the country, do you have policies and procedures in place for addressing this situation?

⁷ Noem v. Garcia, 2025 WL 1077101, at *1 (U.S. Apr. 10, 2025).

⁸ Dareh Gregorian, Katherine Doyle & Lawrence Hurley, *President of El Salvador Says He Won’t Return Mistakenly Deported Man to U.S.*, NBC NEWS (Apr. 14, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/trump-administration/president-el-salvador-wont-return-deported-man-kilmar-abrego-garcia-rcna201136>.

⁹ Lawrence Hurley, *‘Obviously Illegal’: Experts Pan Trump’s Plan to Deport ‘Homegrown Criminals,’* NBC NEWS (Apr. 14, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/trump-floats-legally-questionable-proposal-deport-us-citizens-rcna201183>.

¹⁰ Olivia Harden, *Airline Abandons Bay Area Hub to Instead Offer ICE Deportation Flights*, SFGATE (Apr. 8, 2025), <https://www.sfgate.com/travel/article/airline-aborts-bay-area-hub-begin-flying-ice-20265627.php>.

¹¹ Mark Pazniokas, *Avelo Expanding to CT’s Bradley Airport Following Lobbying, Tax Deal*, CT MIRROR (July 24, 2024), <https://ctmirror.org/2024/07/24/avelo-bradley-airport-international-flights>.

¹² Letter from Conn. Att’y Gen. William Tong to Andrew Levy, Chief Exec. Off., Avelo Airlines (Apr. 8, 2025), https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/ag/press_releases/2025/4-8-25-william-tong---avelo-airlines-contract-letter.pdf?rev=c21c8e40d68b4e679ee99e86a2458760&hash=61018BE365AD1AC49D4E7DAD7CE8909E.

¹³ Letter from Andrew Levy, Chief Exec. Off., Avelo Airlines, to Conn. Att’y Gen. William Tong (Apr. 15, 2025), https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/ag/press_releases/2025/avelo-airlines--ct-attorney-general-response-letter-250415-002.pdf.

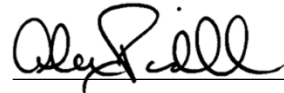
¹⁴ *About Avelo*, AVELO AIRLINES, <https://www.aveloair.com/about-us>.

- a. If so, please provide copies of those policies and procedures.
3. If you become aware that an individual aboard your deportation flight is protected by a court order preventing their removal or that they have other lawful status (such as asylum, cancellation of removal, and withholding of removal), will you refuse to fly the individual out of the country?
 - a. If the government nevertheless directs you to fly the individual out of the country, will you comply with the government's instruction or the court's order?
 - b. If you become aware that an individual aboard your deportation flight is protected by a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction preventing their removal, and the government nevertheless directs you to fly the individual out of the country, will you inform the judge that issued the order of the government's actions?
4. If you become aware that an individual aboard your deportation flight is a U.S. citizen, will you refuse to fly the individual out of the country?
 - a. If the government nevertheless instructs you to fly the individual out of the country, will you comply with the government's instruction?
5. What changes have been made or will be made to existing or planned commercial service as a result of this contract?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator