

Opening Statement from Andreina Mejia for March 24, 2026 Congressional Hearing

My name is Andreina Mejia. I am a resident of Los Angeles and the mother of a 15-year-old boy with disabilities who was handcuffed outside of a Los Angeles high school in August of 2025 after federal immigration agents mistakenly identified him as a suspect. My son is a United States citizen. My son was waiting in a car with me, his mother, while his sister registered for classes inside.

This all happened in the morning of August 11, 2025. I was on the phone outside of my son's school, and something told me to look up, when I just seen this white truck approaching my car, and it looked like coming directly to me, where I'm like, oh, my God, did they lose control? Like, he's going to hit my car.

Then, I saw these two men get off from the front pointing their guns at me and my son, like, actually at our car. I had my window a little bit down. They just came one from my side, the other one from my son's side, and they just opened our doors. They took me out. They took my son out.

All I remember me telling my son is like: "Don't make any movement. Just follow instructions," just because, in my mind, I'm like, OK, they're pointing guns. If they see my son trying to reach for something, I don't know if they're going to shoot.

So I was trying to maintain him calm. And after that, I'm just seeing that they pulled him out. And I'm like: "What's going on?"

The guy's like; "Oh, like, we're looking for somebody and your son fits that description."

"I mean, who are you guys looking for?" And they showed me a picture. And I'm like: "That's not my son. Like, my son is with me at all times."

So, after that, they let my son come towards me. As my son was approaching me, he started crying and just hugged me. And I didn't really appreciate the comment that the guy did where he just called my son: "Oh, we confuse you with somebody else, but just look at the bright side. Like, you're going to have an exciting story to tell your friends when you go back to school."

I just looked at him. And, as a mom, it hurt me, because I was just thinking, there's nothing exciting about getting guns pointed at you.

I was really upset just because, like I said, there's nothing exciting about that, and especially how can you be approaching somebody without first asking, oh, let me see an identification to see who you are?

I mean, you just can't be targeting people just because, oh, you look like that person or because you guys got the same color skin. Yes, my son is a bit darker than me, but especially a minor. I mean, I'm the mom. You could approach me and be like, oh, we're looking for somebody. What's your son's name? I would have gave it to you.

My son has been traumatized by this ordeal. My so doesn't completely understand. He had confusion, it was just like, I guess he was just trying to wrap his head on, like, what's going on? I mean, it's not an everyday thing that somebody just randomly gets guns pointed at them, like, especially when you're not doing anything.

I was just trying to explain it to him to the best of my ability, just because I know, if somebody were to ask him something, he won't really understand what you guys are asking him. He has this thing where he always looks at me to try to be like, OK, mom, explain it to me in a way where I know I'm going to understand.

Even though he's 15, his brain is pretty much kind of like a 8- or 9-year-old.

I was also really upset because, like I said, there's nothing exciting about what the federal agents did, and especially how can you be approaching somebody without first asking, oh, let me see an identification to see who you are?

The federal agents also tried to justify their conduct by saying they were looking for a criminal from a Salvadorian gang. However, they're wrong for that because my son was a special needs kid, where in their right mind do they think that he's going to be gang-affiliated?

So when I heard the agents say that, that they were looking for this person and that he was apparently Salvadorian, I'm not -- we're not Salvadorians. At this point, it's like, what now? Who's going to help my son deal with a situation where there's time still that it's hard for me as his mom to wake him up in the morning to go to school?

Sometimes, he doesn't want to go to school. Sometimes, he has good days. Sometimes, he has bad days. Sometimes, he says he can't sleep. Right now is a little bit more calmer, but in the beginning, when it was recent, I would be driving and just like making sure he was OK and, out of nowhere, he would just get emotional.

So I will pull over and I'm like: "What's going on?"

And he's just like: "Oh, now I don't feel safe, because now I feel that whenever we're in the street, I have to look at my surroundings."

At the end of this, ICE agents just need to be more professional and not just target innocent people.

All this that they're doing is unacceptable. And just I see all these different videos, and it breaks my heart, just because I'm like, what world are we living in now? Like, even to me that I go out and, even though I'm born here, I'm even scared sometimes to go, because I'm like, what about them mistaking me by somebody that doesn't have papers, and I tell them I do, and they don't care, and they still try to grab me in a way where they could hurt me?

I just want justice, and I just want them to take accountability for what they did, because, like I said, before all this happened, I feel that my son has been different.