

Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington

2026 Policy Analysis and Resolution on Immigration

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington has issued three prior policy resolutions concerning immigration, in 1995, 2008 and 2017. Each stressed the need for humane application of immigration laws and cited biblical commandments concerning respect and love for the stranger. When we first addressed the issues over 30 years ago, our immigration system was broken. It has remained broken ever since.

This Policy Analysis and Resolution explains how conditions have deteriorated further and how current laws, policies, detention and enforcement practices violate the principles we have long advanced.

JCRC “endeavors to foster a society based on freedom, justice and democratic pluralism” and “determines a consensus on the broad range of public policy issues central to Jewish conscience... to advocate for Jewish institutions and values.”¹ [Emphasis added].

One such value is to love the stranger. That commandment derives directly from the Torah and is repeated numerous times. One passage, at Deuteronomy 10:19 commands: “Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Exodus 22:10 goes further in commanding: “You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” For most of our people’s history, until the founding of the modern State of Israel, we have been strangers and our advocacy for the fair treatment of immigrants is informed by that history, our shared experience and our traditions.

But it is not just the Jewish community which is concerned with how immigrants are treated. Religious leaders from many faiths, with whom JCRC often work, have rallied against current immigration detention and enforcement policies, have filed lawsuits, have accompanied migrants to court hearings and have led immigration policy protests.²

Indeed, according to the American Immigration Council, a Washington, D.C.-based immigration advocacy organization (AIC), the period since the beginning of 2025, has “arguably seen the most significant changes to U.S. immigration policy in the nation’s history.”³

While we raise significant alarms about current immigration policies and practices, the concerns we raise in this Policy Resolution are not solely aimed at or limited to this administration. Our

¹ JCRC website, jcouncil.org/who.

² *National Public Radio, How the clergy has rallied against the Trump administration’s immigration policies*, December 24, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/12/24/nx-s1-5619298/how-the-clergy-has-rallied-against-the-trump-administrations-immigration.policies#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20clergy%20who%20have%20been,detained%20two%20members%20of%20his%20evangelical%20church>.

³ American Immigration Council, *Mass Deportation: Analyzing the Trump Administration’s Attacks on Immigrants, Democracy, and America*, July 23, 2025, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/mass-deportation-trump-democracy/>.

call for more humane immigration policies applies to current and future administrations and Congresses. We believe that immigration laws, policies and practices need to be re-examined comprehensively by the Congress and the executive branch.

To be clear, we do not advocate for open borders nor for abandoning immigration law enforcement. We do advocate that such immigration admittance, detention and enforcement policies be administered legally, fairly and humanely--consistent with the United States Constitution and with the values we espouse.

Detention.

Immigration Detention is at an All-Time High

According to the Vera Institute of Justice (Vera), a national non-profit organization founded in 1961, the daily adult immigration detention population reached a record high in mid-January 2026 with more than 73,000 people being held in ICE's network of detention facilities across the country. According to Vera, the number of bookings into ICE detention facilities in the first two and a half months of 2026 was 61 percent higher than the same period in 2025.⁴ Similarly, the detention of children is at record levels, with 6,200 children under the age of 18 being held in immigration detention, many of whom suffer from medical conditions and emotional distress.⁵

Immigrants with no criminal records are being detained.

Despite numerous statements from the administration that its goal is to rid the country of dangerous criminal immigrants, and prior Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policies, there has been an increase of **2,450 percent in the number of people detained by ICE who have no criminal record (i.e., 25 1/2 times!)**, according to AIC.⁶ Moreover, from mid-June through October 15, 2025, **the largest single group of people arrested by ICE were people with no criminal record.**⁷

This trend continues. A *Washington Post* analysis of data obtained through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit,

...shows that people with no criminal record still make up the largest share of those detained. In all, 42 percent of those detained in the six weeks after [Alex] Pretti's death [in Minneapolis on January 24, 2026] had no criminal record. That is a slight drop from

⁴ *Ten Things Vera's ICE Detention Trends Dashboard Reveals About ICE Detention Through March 2026*, April 10, 2026, <https://www.vera.org/news/ten-things-veras-ice-detention-trends-dashboard-reveals-about-ice-detention-through-march-2026>

⁵ *ICE Has Detained 6,200+ Kids in Trump's Second Term, Up 10x Since Biden Left Office*, April 26, 2026, <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2026/04/06/ice-kids-detention-over-6200-trump>

⁶ AIC, *Immigration Detention Expansion in Trump's Second Term*, January 2026 at p. 4, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/immigration-detention-report.pdf>, (AIC Detention Report).

⁷ *AIC Detention Report* at p. 13.

the six weeks that preceded his death, when that figure was 46 percent. Thirty percent had prior convictions and 29 percent had pending charges in the latter weeks.⁸

As reported by *The Washington Post* on April 6, 2026, immigration agents conducted nearly 20,000 arrests in the DMV area from the onset of the current administration through March 10, 2026. This figure contrasts with fewer than 3,800 arrests recorded during the final full year of the previous administration. According to *The Post*'s analysis, ICE arrests have fallen sharply in the District of Columbia since December 2025 but have remained steady in Maryland and Virginia. Sixty percent of those arrested had no criminal record. *The Post* attributed the reduction in arrests in D.C. to a federal district court ruling that the "administration's escalating use of immigration arrests in D.C. without a warrant probably violated federal law."⁹

Even worse, inside detention facilities,

Inadequate medical care has been a serious problem for many years. A 2024 study found that 95 percent of deaths in ICE detention could potentially have been prevented with better medical care. Many individuals with serious medical conditions held in detention have reported that medical staff often provide only basic pain medication when asked, and delay referrals to the hospital.¹⁰

Making matters even more oppressive for those held in immigration detention, individuals are held in cells, wear prison uniforms and are subject to being held in solitary confinement at the detention center's discretion. As AIC points out, "unlike a sentence to jail with a definite end date, some individuals may remain in immigration detention for years fighting their cases. Given these conditions, many immigrants who have never spent time in jail before are pushed to give up their cases rather than remain detained in poor conditions with no clear end date in sight."¹¹

Tragically, according to NPR, 23 people died in immigration detention in the first five months of the current fiscal year (beginning October 1, 2025), already making this period the deadliest for those in ICE detention since 2004 and almost eight times as many as all fiscal year 2022.¹²

Our immigration detention policies are oppressing the stranger.

ICE Warehouses.

⁸ *The Washington Post*, *Despite signaling change, ICE still arrests many immigrants with no record*, April 3, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2026/04/03/despite-signaling-change-ice-still-arrests-many-immigrants-with-no-record/>.

⁹ *The Washington Post*, *ICE arrests in D.C. region reach nearly 20,000 during Trump's second term*, April 6, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2026/04/06/ice-arrests-dc-maryland-virginia-surge/> (April 6 Post Article).

¹⁰ AIC Detention Report at p. 7.

¹¹ AIC Detention Report at p. 8.

¹² NPR, *Immigration detention on track of deadliest fiscal year since 2004*. March 10, 226, <https://www.npr.org/2026/03/10/g-s1-111238/immigration-detention-deaths-custody>

In 2025, as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act,¹³ Congress appropriated \$45 billion to be spent on immigration detention, more than a decade's worth of prior appropriations for such purposes.¹⁴ According to AIC,

[t]he 'ICE Detention Reengineering Initiative,' as it's called, aims to 'implement a new detention model' by September 30, 2026. Under this 'reengineering' initiative, ICE plans to do away with the decades of somewhat inefficient acquisition of contract detention capacity in pre-existing jails and prisons and instead replace the current system with a new one, under which ICE primarily operates out of 34 facilities that it owns outright,

including 16 so-called "processing centers," which are simply converted commercial warehouses, each holding 1,000-1,500 people; eight "large-scale" detention centers, each holding 7,000 to 10,000 people for up to 60 days; and ten "turnkey" facilities—pre-existing jails and prisons.¹⁵

One such warehouse, proposed to be a processing center, purchased by ICE in January 2026, is in Williamsport, Washington County, Maryland, near Hagerstown. The State of Maryland has sued ICE to stop this construction, citing lack of environmental reviews.¹⁶ On April 15, 2026, a federal court judge issued a preliminary injunction stopping construction and operation of this proposed facility; however, the case remains ongoing.¹⁷

There have been reports of deplorable conditions in at least two other ICE detention facility in our area, in Chantilly, Virginia, where conditions did improve following intense community advocacy and political pressure, and in Baltimore, Maryland, where a federal court issued a preliminary injunction requiring ICE to end unconstitutional and inhumane conditions in a lawsuit brought by the Amica Center for Immigrant Rights and the National Immigration Project.¹⁸

Enforcement

¹³ Public Law 119-21, Section 90003.

¹⁴ AIC, *ICE's Warehouse Purchases Herald New Model for Immigration Detention*, February 24, 2026, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/ice-buys-warehouses-immigration-detention/#:~:text=Crucially%2C%20ICE%20has%20already%20spent,speed%20ahead%20with%20this%20plan> (AIC Warehouse Report).

¹⁵ *AIC Warehouse Report*.

¹⁶ Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown press release, *Attorney General Brown Files Lawsuit to Stop Construction of Unlawful ICE Detention Facility in Washington County*, February 23, 2026, <https://oag.maryland.gov/News/pages/Attorney-General-Brown-Files-Lawsuit-to-Stop-Construction-of-Unlawful-ICE-Detention-Facility-in-Washington-County.aspx>.

¹⁷ Daily Voice Baltimore County, MD, *Federal judge slams brakes on controversial ICE detention facility in Maryland*, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/news/federal-judge-slams-brakes-on-controversial-ice-detention-facility-in-maryland/ar-AA20YMxq>.

¹⁸ Amica Center for Immigrant Rights, *Federal Court orders ICE to end inhumane conditions for immigrants in Baltimore's courthouse holding cells*, March 9, 2026, <https://amicacenter.org/press-releases/federal-court-orders-ice-to-end-inhumane-conditions-for-immigrants-in-baltimores-courthouse-holding-cells/>.

The ICE Budget Has Increased Dramatically

Under the current administration, ICE's budget has skyrocketed, increasing from less than \$6 billion a decade ago to over \$85 billion in the current fiscal year, making it the highest funded law enforcement agency in the United States, according to NPR.¹⁹ ICE is poised to receive even more funding in future years, if legislation currently pending in the Congress is enacted.

Enforcement Goes Well Beyond Those Who Have Criminal Records.

The policy of immigration enforcement against people with no criminal background is quite intentional.

It was widely reported that in May 2025, senior administration officials ordered ICE to stop focusing on people with criminal records and instead work towards reaching a goal of 3,000 arrests per day.²⁰ Moreover, ICE agents were instructed to go to the nearest Home Depot and arrest as many day laborers as they could find to boost arrest numbers.²¹ Less than two weeks later, DHS officers in Los Angeles began conducting “roving patrols” and raids at Home Depots, flea markets, and other areas where immigrants would congregate—and have continued to target similar sites across the country in the months since.²²

Overall, according to *The New York Times*, the current administration has deported about 230,000 people who were arrested inside the United States and another 270,000 at the border; the number of deportations from within the country in the first twelve months of the current administration is already more than the entire four years of the prior administration. At the same time, arrests at the Southwest border have fallen dramatically as fewer people are trying to cross the border.²³

Violations of the Fourth Amendment.

The National Immigration Law Center (NILC), a California-based immigration advocacy organization founded in 1979, recently stated, “Across the country, immigration officers are

¹⁹ *How ICE grew to be the highest-funded U.S. law enforcement agency*, January 21, 2026, <https://www.npr.org/2026/01/21/nx-s1-5674887/ice-budget-funding-congress-trump>

²⁰ Elizabeth Findell, et.al., *The White House Marching Orders That Sparked the LA Migrant Crackdown*, Wall Street Journal, June 9, 2025 [Cited in *AIC Detention Report* at p. 14].

²¹ Anna Giaritelli, *Stephen Miller ‘eviscerated’ ICE official in private meeting for low deportation numbers*, Washington Examiner, May 30, 2025 [cited in *AIC Detention Report* at p. 14].

²² Alicia Victoria Lozano, *Home Depots become prime locations for immigration enforcement*, NBC News, August 23, 2025 [cited in *AIC Detention Report* at p. 14].

²³ *The New York Times*, *How Many People has Trump Deported So Far?*, January 17, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/01/18/us/trump-deportation-numbers-immigration-crackdown.html>.

breaking into people's homes, stopping people in public because of their race, and making arrests in ways that violate the Constitution and our laws.”²⁴ According to NILC,

Under current law, federal immigration officers cannot enter someone's home without permission unless they have a warrant signed by a federal judge or if there are “exigent circumstances” (meaning a true emergency like if the officers need to act fast to prevent the destruction of evidence or prevent someone from being harmed). In a public place, federal immigration officers are supposed to have an administrative warrant – a warrant signed by an immigration officer – to arrest someone. But the law does allow officers to arrest someone without any kind of a warrant if the officer has good reason to believe the person doesn't have permission to be in the United States and the person is likely to escape before the officer can get a warrant.²⁵

According to NILC and as set forth in a letter from U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal,²⁶ ICE has issued instructions to its agents to use administrative warrants issued by immigration officers and not judicial warrants signed by a judge to enter a home. According to Senator Blumenthal, this policy not only contradicts written training materials previously issued by ICE, but it also violates the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures. The Supreme Court has held in several cases that the Fourth Amendment prohibits the police from making a warrantless and nonconsensual entry into a suspect's home and that such a warrant must be signed and executed by a “neutral and detached magistrate.”²⁷

Violence.

The world witnessed two DHS- related shootings in January 2026 that resulted in the fatalities of Renee Good and Alex Preti in Minneapolis. In both cases, DHS officials attempted to frame the killings as acts of self-defense, but eyewitness accounts and video evidence cast serious doubt about whether lethal force was necessary or justified.²⁸ Moreover, ICE agents often wear masks and otherwise attempt to hide their identities.

The Minneapolis shootings are, however, not isolated incidents. According to AIC,

...immigration agents are routinely using violent force in immigration enforcement and arrests. Immigration agents often break the windows of vehicles to remove their occupants. Individuals being arrested are often pushed to the ground. Agents often spray chemical crowd-control agents

²⁴ NILC, *Frequently Asked Questions: Leaked ICE Memos About Arrests and Warrants*, <https://www.nilc.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions-on-leaked-ice-memos-about-arrests-and-warrants/> (NILC FAQs).

²⁵ NILC FAQs.

²⁶ *Letter from Senator Richard Blumenthal to Benjamin C. Huffman, Director Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers*, January 21, 2026.

²⁷ See *Payton v. New York*, 445 U.S. 573 (1980); *Coolidge v. New Hampshire*, 403 U.S. 443 (1971).

²⁸ AIC Fatality Blog.

at people who appear to be merely observing the scene or recording officers. Several people have been shot in the course of immigration enforcement operations, and five of them have been killed.²⁹

Section 287(g) Agreements.

As far back as 2008, JCRC has opposed legislation or practices that would involve state and local governments in immigration enforcement.³⁰ However, federal law, Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, authorizes the federal government to partner with local law enforcement officers to perform certain immigration enforcement functions pursuant to a memorandum of understanding with the federal government. On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order calling for the execution of 287(g) agreements to the maximum extent permitted by law.³¹ At the beginning of the current administration, there were 135 such agreements. As of March 23, 2026, ICE has signed 1,552 Section 287(g) memoranda of understanding covering 39 states and two territories.³², which means **there has been an increase of 1050% in 287(g) agreements in just over a year.**³³

In addition to blurring the line between community policing and immigration enforcement, which JCRC has opposed for many years, 287(g) agreements are harmful in many ways:

- Immigrant communities become fearful of local police, often avoiding them altogether, even to report crimes or seek emergency assistance,
- Oversight by ICE of local partners is lacking: a January 2021 Government Accountability Office report found that ICE had failed to establish performance goals and did not have measures in place to assess its effectiveness, concluding that that ICE would be unable to provide effective oversight over law enforcement partners,³⁴
- Time spent on immigration enforcement by local authorities diverts resources from critical public safety needs, including incidents of antisemitism,
- Racial profiling and civil rights violations result from these agreements,³⁵

²⁹ AIC Report, *How ICE Went Rogue*, February 11, 2026, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/ice-cbp-legal-analysis/> (AIC ICE Went Rogue).

³⁰ *JCRC Immigration Policy Resolution February 27, 2008*, <https://jcouncil.org/resolutions/immigration-policy-resolution>.

³¹ *January 20, 2025 Executive Order, section 11*.

³² *ICE Memorandum*, <https://www.ice.gov/identify-and-arrest/287g#:~:text=As%20of%20March%2023%2C%202026,and%20%20U.S.%20%E2%80%8BTerritories.%20%E2%80%8B>

³³ The Hill, February 16, 2026, quoting an analysis by FWD.us, <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5740760-trump-immigration-enforcement-agreements/>.

³⁴ Cited in *AIC Fact Sheet, The 287(g) Program: An Overview*, July 8, 2021, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/287g-program-immigration/>.

³⁵ AIC Blog, *287(g) Agreements with ICE Threaten Welcoming Communities*, September 26, 2025, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/287g-agreements-ice-threaten-communities/>.

- These programs overwhelmingly sweep up people without criminal records; three-quarters of all 287(g) detainees are issued against people with no criminal records.³⁶

Fortunately, Maryland has enacted legislation to prohibit state and local participation in the 287(g) program.³⁷ However, this legislation does not prohibit informal cooperation between local law enforcement agencies and ICE. As reported by Fox 45 News in Baltimore, several county sheriff's offices in Maryland have announced their intention to continue to cooperate with ICE even absent formal 287(g) agreements.³⁸ The District of Columbia has never taken part in the program. In Virginia, Governor Spanberger issued Executive Directive 1 on February 4, 2026, directing the termination of all 287(g) agreements by state law enforcement agencies and on April 22, 2026, the Governor signed legislation that prohibits local law enforcement agencies from entering into such agreements unless such agreements contain certain strict conditions.³⁹

Enforcement in Sensitive Areas.

As noted above, the administration has set aggressive goals for immigration enforcement, demanding that federal agents arrest 3,000 people a day, which would amount to over one million per year. According to AIC,

... immigration agents have a mandate to arrest and detain as many people as possible. As a result, pedestrian stops — which previously have not been a significant part of immigration enforcement — have become routine. Federal agents will often conduct sweeps in places they suspect undocumented immigrants to be — such as the parking lot of Home Depot, residential homes under construction, or on a scooter for a food delivery service.⁴⁰

Moreover, according to AIC, “[u]nder current and past administrations, immigration agents have often engaged in workplace raids that target immigrant workers. They have often done so either with the permission of the employer to enter the workplace, or by producing warrants for a different purpose, but then engaging in mass questioning and detention of workers once they enter.”⁴¹

According to NILC, for decades the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has maintained guidance prohibiting ICE enforcement actions in certain “sensitive areas,” which were more clearly defined during the prior administration to include schools, healthcare facilities, places of worship, places children gather, social services establishments, disaster/emergency response

³⁶ American Civil Liberties Union Maryland *Press Release*, February 17, 2026, <https://www.aclu-md.org/press-releases/aclu-maryland-statement-on-governor-moore-signing-emergency-legislation-banning-formal-287g-agreements-in-maryland/> (ACLU Press Release).

³⁷ *ACLU Press Release*.

³⁸ <https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/maryland-sheriffs-vow-continued-cooperation-ice-despite-287g-agreement-ban>.

³⁹ Virginia State Legislative Information System, *2026 Regular Session, HB1441*, <https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/20261/HB1441>.

⁴⁰ *AIC ICE Went Rogue*.

⁴¹ *AIC ICE Went Rogue*.

sites, weddings, funerals and religious ceremonies, parades, demonstrations and rallies and spaces near these sensitive areas. On January 31, 2025, ICE issued a memorandum effectively rescinding these prior policies, permitting enforcement in these sensitive areas.⁴²

NILC has pointed out that the areas and institutions now allowed for immigration enforcement are relied upon by individuals and families for basic services and survival needs and the change in prior policies governing sensitive areas will have a chilling effect on immigrant communities who may now be afraid to access medical care, education, childcare and places of worship for fear that they or loved ones will be arrested.

With respect to immigration arrests at courthouses, on January 21, 2025, ICE issued interim guidance, *Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas*, pursuant to which,

ICE officers or agents may conduct civil immigration enforcement actions in or near courthouses when they have credible information that leads them to believe the targeted alien(s) is or will be present at a specific location, and where such action is not precluded by laws imposed by the jurisdiction in which the civil immigration enforcement action will take place.⁴³

Utilizing this guidance, ICE has made arrests of non-citizens attending their immigration hearings. In many cases, the government dismissed proceedings in which immigrants were attempting to gain legal status in this country, including those seeking asylum, and then arrested them immediately thereafter so it could deport them using expedited removal. According to AIC, immigration judges acquiesced in these procedures.⁴⁴

To say that this bait-and-switch practice is unfair is an understatement. This policy undermines the rule of law and the integrity of immigration courts.

However, in a subsequent development, on March 25, 2026, Department of Justice attorneys admitted to a federal district court judge that the ICE guidance cited above “does not and has never applied to civil immigration enforcement actions in or near Executive Office for Immigration Review (‘EOIR’) immigration courts.”⁴⁵ It remains to be seen how this development will affect ICE arrests in and around immigration courts. It appears however that judicial courts remain subject to the guidance cited above, thus permitting immigration enforcement in and around judicial courts.

⁴² NILC, *Fact Sheet: Trump’s Rescission of Protected Areas Policies Undermines Safety for All*, February 26, 2025, <https://www.nilc.org/resources/factsheet-trumps-rescission-of-protected-areas-policies-undermines-safety-for-all/>.

⁴³ ICE, *Protected and Courthouse Arrests*, <https://www.ice.gov/ero/protected-areas>.

⁴⁴ AIC, *As ICE Courthouse Arrests Continue, Few Immigration Courts Resist Pushing Cases Into Expedited Removal*, November 20, 2025, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/ice-arrests-immigration-courts-expedited-removal/>.

⁴⁵ The Hill, *DOJ says it erroneously relied on ICE memo justifying immigration courthouse arrests*, March 26, 2026, <https://thehill.com/homenews/5802728-ice-memo-courthouse-arrests/>.

In our area,

In addition to the people arrested in the D.C. region during check-in appointments at federal immigration offices, many others have been apprehended while on their way to work or school or out shopping, say local leaders and advocates for immigrants. Last year's surge and the ongoing ICE enforcement efforts in the region have left many immigrants 'worried, confused, scared,' said Rocio Treminio-Lopez, the mayor of Brentwood, Maryland, a small town with a large Latino population just outside of Washington.... The crackdown has led immigrant families to recede from public life, avoid events and even keep their children out of after-school programs and weekend activities, Treminio-Lopez said. She said she worries that the effects of the surge of ICE arrests will be long-lasting and that people in the immigration system will no longer trust that the process will treat them fairly.⁴⁶

There have been multiple reports of the negative impact of ICE enforcement actions in and around schools in our area and across the country. As reported by NBC News (NBC) and The Associated Press (AP), a member of the District of Columbia State Board of Education reported that, "In my community, the impact has been immense fear and terror that is threatening student safety getting to and from school every day."⁴⁷ Moreover, NBC and AP cited research that has linked immigration raids near schools to lower academic outcomes for Latino students, who are more likely to have family ties to immigrants.⁴⁸ In January 2026 school administrators at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring confirmed reports of ICE activity next to the school campus.⁴⁹ Further, *The Washington Post* recently reported on a significant drop in District of Columbia school applications as the result of increased deportation fears, particularly in Spanish-dominant dual-language programs and in neighborhoods with large immigrant populations, with one school administrator in a heavily immigrant neighborhood stating that "families are terrified" about immigration enforcement.⁵⁰

ICE activity in and around schools and other sensitive areas has resulted in the filing of at least one lawsuit challenging this practice and asking for restoration of the prior sensitive areas policies. The lawsuit, brought by the Justice Action Center, National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers asserts that the mere presence of ICE near schools, "terrorizes students and educators and disrupts teaching and learning."⁵¹

⁴⁶ April 6 Post Article.

⁴⁷ NBC News and The Associated Press, "A Law enforcement surge has taken a toll on children of immigrants in D.C. schools", September 17, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/law-enforcement-surge-taken-toll-children-immigrants-washington-school-rcna231849> (NBC/AP Report).

⁴⁸ NBC/AP Report.

⁴⁹ Bethesda Today, "Montgomery Blair High security staff monitoring parking lot Friday after ICE activity confirmed near campus", January 23, 2026, <https://bethesdamagazine.com/2026/01/23/montgomery-blair-ice/>.

⁵⁰ The Washington Post, *DC school applications fall amid deportation fears and federal layoffs*, April 12, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2026/04/12/dc-school-enrollment-applications-lottery/>.

⁵¹ neaToday, "NEA Files Emergency Motion to Stop ICE Enforcement Near Schools", February 13, 2026, <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/nea-files-emergency-motion-stop-ice-enforcement-near-schools>, citing PCUN v. Mullin, U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, Case No. 6:25-cv-00699-AA.

Lack of Due Process in Immigration Proceedings

The Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution states in part that “no **person** shall ... be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law...” [Emphasis added]. The United States Supreme Court has considered on several occasions whether the Fifth Amendment applies to aliens and has ruled that “*all aliens* within the United States, including those who entered unlawfully, may be expelled only after proceedings conforming to traditional standards of fairness encompassed in due process of law.”⁵²

The Supreme Court has ruled that indigent criminal defendants have a right to counsel.⁵³ However, even though non-citizens have a right to due process and face the potential of deportation and/or extended detention in immigration proceedings, **the courts have never extended the constitutional right to appointed counsel to indigent persons in immigration proceedings.** It stands to reason that immigrants, who may have limited English language skills and are likely to be unfamiliar with U.S. immigration proceedings, will fare far worse if they are not represented by competent counsel. In fact, according to Vera, in a 2021 study 70 percent of people in immigration detention facilities lacked legal counsel, but immigrants with attorneys were three and a half times more likely to be granted bond (enabling release from detention) and ten times more likely to establish grounds to remain in the United States.⁵⁴

There are very limited governmental resources in our area to support poor people in immigration proceedings. There are many non-profit organizations, both nationally and at the local level, which provide or arrange for legal assistance to non-citizens, and many law firms participate in legal representation of indigent non-citizens in immigration proceedings on a *pro bono* basis. In the DMV, several organizations, including HIAS and the Amica Center for Immigrant Rights, both do outstanding work advocating on behalf of the immigrant community. However, despite their best efforts, the network of local immigration service providers cannot keep up with the demand for legal assistance in the wake of the massive increase in the arrest, detention and deportation of immigrants, even those who have been in this country for many years.

Suffice it to say, indigent immigrants are generally and unfairly facing proceedings in the immigration process without legal counsel.

Changes to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program

Since 1980, federal law has authorized the United States to admit refugees, who are people generally outside their country who are unable to return to their home country due to

⁵² Library of Congress, *Constitution Annotated*, Artl.S8, C18.8.7.2 *Aliens in the United States*, https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artl-S8-C18-8-7-2/ALDE_00001262/, citing *Shaughnessy v. United States ex.re. Mezei*, 345 U.S. 206,212 (1953); *Matthews v. Diaz*, 426 U.S. 67,77 (1976) and *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202,215 (1982).

⁵³ *Gideon v. Wainwright*, 372 U.S. 335 (1963).

⁵⁴ Vera, *Immigrants Facing Deportation Do Not Have the Right to a Publicly Funded Attorney. Here's How to Change That*, February 9, 2021, <https://www.vera.org/news/immigrants-facing-deportation-do-not-have-the-right-to-a-publicly-funded-attorney-heres-how-to-change-that>.

persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.⁵⁵ Historically, since the program's inception in 1980, the U.S. has welcomed between 50,000 and 100,00 refugees annually. Candidates are identified by the UN Refugee Agency, undergo multi-year security vetting, and are resettled in U.S. communities with the support of non-profit agencies. After one year, refugees can apply for permanent legal status (often referred to as a "green card") and can apply for citizenship after five years. However, for 2026 the administration has substantially reduced the refugee limit to 7,500 individuals, primarily reserved for White Afrikaners from South Africa, according to the organization, Welcome. US, a non-partisan non-profit organization.⁵⁶

In January 2026, the administration announced Operation PARRIS (the "Post-Admission Refugee Reverification and Integrity") initiative, the purpose of which is to detain and re-screen more than 200,000 refugees who have been in the U.S. legally for more than one year pursuant to the Refugee Admissions Program but have not yet obtained their green cards. According to Welcome. US,

Refugees undergo years of background checks, interviews, biometric screening, and medical exams before they arrive in the U.S. Re-opening these cases creates fear and instability for families who thought they had reached a permanent and legal status that provided safety.⁵⁷

According to HIAS, Operation PARRIS resulted in the arrest of scores of resettled refugees in Minnesota and their detention in Texas.⁵⁸ However, on February 27, 2026, the federal district court in Minnesota issued a preliminary injunction halting the arrests and ordering the release of detained refugees, stating in its opinion that the new policy raises "serious constitutional concerns" that "turns refugees' American dream into a dystopian nightmare."⁵⁹

Notwithstanding the issuance of injunctive relief by the court in Minnesota, according to HIAS, DHS issued a new memorandum in February 2026 that would allow the indefinite detention of resettled refugees who had been in the country more than a year without obtaining a green card.⁶⁰ In a case brought by refugees and the Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts, a federal district court in Massachusetts ordered the policy paused, without objection from the government, finding that the refugees are likely to succeed in challenging the policy and finding

⁵⁵ Congressional Research Service, *U.S. Refugee Admissions Program*, January 20, 2023, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47399>.

⁵⁶ Welcome.US, *Refugee Resettlement: Key Changes*, https://welcome.us/stay-informed?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=awareness&utm_content=search&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23624987223&gbraid=0AAAAAplwcO1Yn0dZ0MAye5DemkzpAAAdN3&gclid=CjwKCAjw7XQBhBkEiwAtStpp8KYTeqs1Xiwb84yl8mAE12GNLHDU69Vp5H06RyZ71KBYkgRysiGkxoCtoMQAvD_BwE (Welcome U.S. Memo).

⁵⁷ Welcome US Memo.

⁵⁸ HIAS, *Advocacy Talking Points*, March 6, 2026, <https://hias.org/wp-content/uploads/Advocacy-and-Policy-Talking-Points-March-6th-.pdf>. (HIAS Talking Points).

⁵⁹ United States District Court District of Minnesota, Memorandum Opinion and Order, *U.H.A., et. al. v. Bondi, et.al.*, February 27, 2026, <https://e1.nmcdn.io/assets/irap/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/ECF-133-Opinion-and-Order-Granting-in-Part-and-Denying-in-Part-Preliminary-Injunction.pdf>.

⁶⁰ HIAS Talking Points.

that they would face irreparable harm in the absence of the court's orders, according to the International Refugee Assistance Project, a global legal aid and advocacy organization.⁶¹

It should be noted that the case in Minnesota was combined into the case in Massachusetts and that the latter lawsuit remains ongoing without a final judgment even though the court has issued a preliminary injunction. Thus, the issue remains open. As stated by the CEO of HIAS, Beth Oppenheim,

This policy is a transparent effort to detain and potentially deport thousands of people who are legally present in this country, people the U.S. government itself welcomed after years of extreme vetting. They were promised safety and the chance to rebuild their lives. Instead, DHS is now threatening them with arrest and indefinite detention... I have never seen anything like this in my 25 years of refugee protection work. This memo was done in secret, with zero coordination with the organizations that serve refugees. It is a betrayal of our values and our legal commitments, and it will cause extraordinary harm.
{Emphasis added}.

Temporary Protected Status

In 1990 Congress created a program known as Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a temporary immigration status provided to nationals of specified countries who are in the United States at a time that there is an ongoing armed conflict, environmental disaster or extraordinary and temporary conditions in their home country, making it dangerous or impractical for them to return to that designated country. The designation specifying the applicable foreign country is made by the Secretary of DHS, after consultation with other agencies. It does not provide a path to citizenship, but it does provide a work permit and protection from deportation to these foreign nationals from these designated countries during the temporary period.⁶² A TPS designation can be made for six, 12 or 18 months at a time, subject to extension; prior to expiration of TPS, the DHS Secretary must determine if the conditions in the designated foreign country have materially improved such that the reason for the initial grant of TPS no longer applies.⁶³

When a TPS designation terminates, the person affected returns to the immigration status held prior to receiving TPS, meaning many TPS recipients become undocumented and subject to removal.⁶⁴ As of March 31, 2025, 17 countries were designated under the TPS program, with protections afforded to almost 1.3 million people, according to the National Immigration Forum

⁶¹ International Refugee Assistance Project, *Court Blocks Unlawful National Refugee Detention Policy*, March 23, 2026, <https://refugeerights.org/news-resources/court-blocks-unlawful-national-refugee-detention-policy>.

⁶² AIC, *Temporary Protected Status (TPS): An Overview*, March 13, 2026, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/temporary-protected-status-tps-overview/> (AIC TPS Overview).

⁶³ AIC TPS Overview

⁶⁴ AIC TPS Overview

(NIF), a non-profit organization founded in 1930.⁶⁵ As of March 2026, that number had been reduced to 11 countries although several countries' TPS terminations have been extended by court orders.⁶⁶

Since early 2025, the administration has announced the termination of TPS status for Venezuela, Haiti, Nepal, Honduras, Nicaragua, Syria, Afghanistan, Cameroon, South Sudan, Burma, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen. A substantial number of lawsuits have been brought by refugees and supporting organizations challenging the attempted termination of TPS protections by the current administration. In many cases where these terminations have been challenged, federal courts have at least temporarily paused these actions.⁶⁷ These lawsuits remain subject to appeals.

With respect to El Salvador, the current termination date for TPS, as extended by the prior administration, is September 9, 2026. The current administration has not attempted to accelerate the expiration date but has not announced whether TPS will be further extended.⁶⁸ According to a study conducted by George Mason University, Institute for Immigration Research (GMUIIR), there are over 200,000 Salvadoran immigrants living in the Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, D.C. metropolitan areas, of which over 40,000 live in each of Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties and over 34,000 live in Fairfax County. Over 32,000 Salvadorans living in the Baltimore and D.C. areas are TPS holders.⁶⁹

El Salvador was first designated for TPS by President George W. Bush in 2001, following a series of devastating earthquakes, with subsequent administrations extending TPS status. In 2019, the first Trump administration attempted to terminate TPS but, following litigation and then the change of administrations, TPS status was maintained and then extended several times by the prior administration through its current September 2026 expiration.⁷⁰

Allowing the TPS designation for El Salvador to lapse would have substantial and negative familial and economic consequences. If TPS is terminated, thousands of families may need to be separated as the parents will have to leave the U.S. but their American-born children, who are citizens, will be able to stay. GMUIIR cited a report from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center from 2017, that included El Salvador as well as Haiti and Honduras which found on a national basis that removing individuals from these countries,

will cost taxpayers over \$3 billion, and the inability of these individuals to work will result in over \$45 billion in lost Gross Domestic Product over a decade and

⁶⁵ National Immigration Forum, *Temporary Protected Status (TPS): Fact Sheet*, April 9, 2026, <https://forumtogether.org/article/temporary-protected-status-fact-sheet/> (NIF TPS Fact Sheet).

⁶⁶ AIC TPS Overview

⁶⁷ NIF TPS Fact Sheet.

⁶⁸ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status/temporary-protected-status-designated-country-el-salvador>.

⁶⁹ George Mason University, Institute for Immigration Research, *El Salvador: Salvadoran Population in the Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD Metro Areas*, https://iir.gmu.edu/immigrant-stories-overview/el-salvador/el-salvador-salvadoran-population-in-the-washington-dc-and-baltimore-md-metro-areas#_edn5 (GMUIIR Report).

⁷⁰ GMUIIR Report.

\$6.9 billion in lost Social Security and Medicare contributions over a decade. At the same time, the wholesale lay-off of the entire employed TPS population from these three countries would result in \$967 million of turnover costs, e.g. costs employers incur when an employee leaves a position.⁷¹

It remains to be seen whether the administration will further extend TPS status for El Salvador but if it does not, it is highly likely that such a decision will be challenged in court, as has been the case with respect to TPS terminations for other countries.

What is clear, however, is that the handling of the TPS program thus far by the current administration is consistent with its handling of other aspects of immigration policies described in this Policy Resolution—a strong desire to detain and deport as many immigrants as possible.

Change in Green Card Policy

On May 22, 2026, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), an agency within DHS, announced a new policy⁷² pursuant to which people seeking green cards, i.e., applying for permanent residency status, must, except in extraordinary circumstances, leave the United States and return to their home country in order to apply for a green card. According to CNN,

The abrupt policy change stands to affect a large swath of the legal US immigration population, compelling those seeking legal permanent residency to leave the country — separating families, forcing people to leave their jobs and disrupting communities in the process. Applying for a green card is a notoriously arduous process that can take several months to years to complete.⁷³

This very significant policy change is an assault by the current administration on a potential path to legal immigration and/or citizenship by foreign born people.

The Impact of Immigration on the United States

As noted at the outset of this policy resolution, we are a nation of immigrants. As of 2022, there were 45.4 million foreign-born people living in the United States, comprising approximately 13 percent of the total population of this country, according to GMUIIR.⁷⁴ The United States would not exist in its present form and would not be a superpower without immigrants. But there are

⁷¹ GMUIIR Report.

⁷² USCIS, *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Will Grant ‘Adjustment of Status’ Only in Extraordinary Circumstances*, May 22, 2026, <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/us-citizenship-and-immigration-services-will-grant-adjustment-of-status-only-in-extraordinary>.

⁷³ CNN, *Trump administration upends green card process, potentially compelling hundreds of thousands to leave US to apply*, May 22, 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/05/22/politics/green-card-seekers-leave-us-apply>.

⁷⁴ George Mason University, Institute for Immigration Research, <https://iir.gmu.edu/>.

those who believe that recent immigration has harmed the country due to crime, the strain on public subsidies and the impact on our economy. We examine those assertions.

Crime.

According to the AIC,

a robust body of research shows that welcoming immigrants into American communities not only does not increase crime, but can actually strengthen public safety. In fact, immigrants—including undocumented immigrants—are less likely to commit crimes than the U.S.-born. This is true at the national, state, county, and neighborhood levels, and for both violent and non-violent crime.⁷⁵

Using FBI and U.S. Census Bureau data, AIC studied the relationship between total crime rates and immigrant shares of the population between 2017 and 2022 at the state level and concluded that “higher immigrant population shares are not associated with higher crime rates, which aligns with a wealth of prior research on this topic.”⁷⁶

Despite claims to the contrary, crime among immigrant communities is not a major problem.

Use of Public Subsidies.

JCRC has previously issued a Policy Resolution concerning access to federal benefits by non-citizens.⁷⁷ Under current law, **the costs associated with subsidies for the immigrant community are a tiny portion of the federal budget.**

However, we point out that the Congress enacted severe new restrictions⁷⁸ on immigrant eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is likely to result in greater food insecurity among the immigrant community. A 2023 study published by the National Institutes of Health found that non-citizens have much higher odds of food insecurity than U.S. citizens, that there were no food insecurity disparities between citizens and non-citizens when they utilized SNAP and that non-citizens who did not use SNAP were more likely to report food insecurity than their U.S.-born counterparts.⁷⁹

Immigrants’ Impact on the Economy

⁷⁵ AIC, *Debunking the Myth of Immigrants and Crime*, October 17, 2024, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/debunking-myth-immigrants-and-crime/> (AIC Immigrants and Crime).

⁷⁶ AIC Immigrants and Crime.

⁷⁷ JCRC, “*Food Security*”, March 17, 2017, <https://jcrc.org/resolutions/food-security>.

⁷⁸ P.L. 119-21, Sectio 10108.

⁷⁹ National Institutes of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information, “*Food Insecurity Disparities Among Immigrants in the U.S.*”, June 7, 2023, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37790670/>.

Many of those targeted by aggressive enforcement have lived in the United States for years, built families, and contributed significantly to local economies. Removing such individuals can destabilize households, reduce labor-force participation in crucial industries, and increase the long-term needs of affected children.

A 2024 paper from the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Carsey School of Public Policy concluded,

Given the numbers of immigrants currently not authorized to be in the United States, their prevalence in the workforce and their concentration in specific industries, the impact of their removal on the economy would be substantial.

Specifically:

- Almost eleven million unauthorized immigrants live in the United States, accounting for a little over 3 percent of the total U.S. population.
- The population of immigrants not authorized to be in the United States is mostly of working age—two-thirds of them are in the prime working ages of 25 to 54 compared to less than 40 percent of U.S. citizens.
- About 8 million unauthorized immigrants are employed, which is about 5 percent of the U.S. workforce.
- Unauthorized immigrants make up a particularly large share of workers in several industries, accounting for 22 percent of all farmworkers, 15 percent of construction workers, and 8 percent of manufacturing workers (which includes food production such as meatpacking).
- Seventy-nine percent of unauthorized immigrants have been in the country over 10 years.⁸⁰

Moreover, the UNH authors found,

Future large-scale deportations have been estimated to reduce the size of the U.S. economy. Estimates of U.S. economic loss range from 2.6 percent to 6.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (the most widely used measure of national income). At 2023 levels, those equate to losses to the economy of between \$711 billion and \$1.7 trillion.⁸¹

In addition, AIC issued a report in 2025 warning that, “the U.S. childcare system (already stretched thin by rising costs, staffing shortages, and high demand) is facing catastrophic

⁸⁰ University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy, *The Economic Impact on Citizens and Authorized Immigrants of Mass Deportations*, Authors Robert Lynch and Michael Ettlinger, August 29, 2024, <https://carsey.unh.edu/sites/default/files/media/2024-08/economic-impact-mass-deportation-lit-review.pdf> (UNH Paper).

⁸¹ UNH Paper.

disruption” under the mass deportation agenda being pursued. “The loss of even a fraction of the childcare workforce could leave families with no coverage and no ability to work.”⁸²

Clearly, mass deportations will hurt our economy.

Attitudes Toward Immigrants.

NILC has cited polling on Americans’ attitudes about immigration:

A [July 2025] Gallup poll found that ‘Americans have grown markedly more positive toward immigration over the past year, with the share wanting immigration reduced dropping from 55% in 2024 to 30% today. At the same time, a record-high 79% of U.S. adults say immigration is a good thing for the country.’⁸³

Conclusion.

The evidence is clear: immigrants commit less crime than native-born citizens, immigrants’ use of public subsidies is minimal, deportation of immigrants hurts our economy, and the public overwhelmingly supports immigration.

What, then, is the justification for mass deportations and other abusive policies currently being carried out?

⁸² AIC, *New Report: Trump’s Mass Deportation Agenda Will Deepen the Childcare Crisis*, December 11, 2025, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/press-release/report-childcare-crisis-trump-mass-deportation/>.

⁸³ NILC, *Overview of Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs*, January 1, 2026, <https://www.nilc.org/resources/overview-immeligfedprograms/>, citing Lydia Said, *Surge in U.S. Concern About Immigration Has Abated* (Gallup, July 11, 2025), <https://news.gallup.com/poll/692522/surge-concern-immigration-abated.aspx>.

Policy Resolutions.

Based on the foregoing analysis and in keeping with biblical commandments, JCRC resolves:

- To demand that the Congress and executive branch replace our broken immigration system with one that is consistent with the Constitution, more humane and provides fair and reasonable rules, procedures and criteria for establishing a pathway to citizenship for the immigrant community.
- To oppose immigration enforcement in sensitive areas, including in religious institutions, immigration and judicial courthouses, and schools.
- To oppose excessive additional appropriations that would fund inhumane, illegal and unconstitutional ICE enforcement and detention actions.
- To support efforts to provide state and local funding of counsel for immigrants in immigration proceedings, particularly those in detention.
- To oppose public officials' demonization of immigrants and dehumanizing language that puts immigrants at risk.
- To support giving schools' the resources that they need to protect immigrant students and keep them safe to ensure that they are ready to respond to ICE enforcement actions at or near their facilities.
- To demand that state and local governments address food insecurity in all communities, including in immigrant communities, which have reached crisis levels particularly in light of the recently passed restrictions on SNAP, and that do not rely entirely on non-profits to do so.
- To oppose the mass deportation and detention of immigrants, and particularly, the goal of establishing specific quotas for detention.
- To support efforts to substantially improve conditions in immigration detention facilities and make them more humane and to ensure that adequate medical care is provided and that all such facilities are decent, safe and sanitary.
- To oppose the construction of additional ICE detention facilities, including the proposed facility in Washington County, Maryland, to the extent that such facilities encourage mass detention of immigrants in violation of the law and due process. JCRC recognizes the importance of housing properly and legally detained persons in close proximity to their homes and their legal counsel, which may, in limited circumstances, require new facilities, provided however, that any new facilities must be decent, safe and sanitary and consistent with the values we espouse.
- To oppose the use of non-judicial warrants to enter homes and other places where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy and to support efforts to require the use of only judicially issued warrants in such circumstances and to otherwise adhere to recognized Fourth Amendment standards.
- To support efforts to bring immigration agents who commit violence to justice, to ban masks, to require immigration agents to clearly display their identity and to support the use of body cameras with immigration agents.
- To support codifying reasonable use-of-force standards for immigration agents that are applicable to other law enforcement agencies.
- To support efforts to terminate the use of Section 287(g) agreements.

- To oppose the practice of timing arrests of immigrants to coincide with the dismissal of their immigration proceedings.
- To oppose the Trump administration's refugee resettlement policies and to support efforts to overturn these policies in the courts.
- To support extension of TPS status for individuals from countries, including El Salvador, where conditions or circumstances prevent such countries from safely handling their return.
- To oppose any unreasonable and unduly burdensome requirements for those engaged in a legal path to permanent residency and/or citizenship, including the requirement that people applying for a green card must return to their home country in order to apply.
- To support efforts to educate the public about the benefits of immigration to the United States.

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