

ICE is arresting gardeners

Some information about what ICE has been doing and why it's a problem, intended for people who think that ICE is only going after violent criminals.

(Compiled mostly by someone who asked to remain anonymous, July 2025; lightly edited and then added to by Jed Hartman in July through October 2025.)

Overview/summary

- Most people detained by ICE aren't violent criminals.
- ICE is detaining US citizens.
- Stephen Miller's quotas are driving ICE to go after grandmas and gardeners.
- ICE is regularly using force on unarmed people, including US citizens.
- ICE is racially profiling people.
- Longtime ICE employees are demoralized at the change in priorities.
- ICE is making false claims about protesters.
- Deporting immigrants will cause big problems for the US food industry.
- ICE is abusing prisoners.

Most people detained by ICE aren't violent criminals

Two articles from the Cato Institute (think tank):

- ["65 Percent of People Taken by ICE Had No Convictions, 93 Percent No Violent Convictions,"](#) by David J. Bier (June 20, 2025)

"New nonpublic data from [ICE] indicate that the government is primarily detaining individuals with no criminal convictions of any kind. Also, among those with criminal convictions, they are overwhelmingly not the violent offenses that ICE continuously uses to justify its deportation agenda."

"As of June 14, ICE had booked into detention 204,297 individuals (since October 1, 2024...). Of those book-ins, 65 percent, or 133,687 individuals, had no criminal

convictions. Moreover, more than 93 percent of ICE book-ins were never convicted of any violent offenses.”

- [“Trump Says Ice Is Arresting the ‘Worst of the Worst’ — New Data Shows That’s Not True,”](#) by David J. Bier (June 25, 2025)

“Many offenses were for victimless crimes that resulted solely from the government’s refusal to let them immigrate and live here legally. The most common convictions for ‘criminal aliens’ detained by ICE were immigration offenses like improper entry and traffic infractions like not having driver’s licenses.”

“The escalation against noncriminals is the result of orders from White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller... ‘What do you mean you’re going after criminals?’ Miller reportedly said. ‘Why aren’t you at Home Depot? Why aren’t you at 7-Eleven?’”

Article from 9News (TV station):

- [“Castle Rock father detained by ICE over decades-old \[marijuana possession\] charges,”](#) by Rhea Jha (August 25, 2025)

“Dale Heath left his Castle Rock home on Aug. 4 for what his wife thought would be another routine trip to renew his immigration paperwork. By that afternoon, he was calling from the Aurora Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility to say he would not be coming home.”

“Dale, 42, immigrated from England in 1991 and has lived in Colorado for nearly a decade.”

“The family said the detention stems from two marijuana possession charges in Texas more than 20 years ago, when Dale was 18.”

“12-year-old daughter Zooey [...] said the hardest part is starting middle school without her dad.”

Two articles from *Newsweek* (magazine):

- [“Green Card Holder Mom Held by ICE for 10 Days Speaks Out—‘It Was Hell,’”](#) by Andrew Stanton (August 27, 2025)

“[...] many green card holders who have minor misdemeanors have also been swept up in ICE detentions.”

“Jimenez Rosa, who legally immigrated to the United States more than 20 years ago when she was 9 years old, was detained by ICE authorities on August 11 at Boston Logan International Airport after returning from a vacation with her husband and children.”

“Officers brought up a decades-old conviction for marijuana possession once she was being held, she said. That conviction has since been pardoned by the governor of Massachusetts.”

- [“Woman Who Spent Majority of Life in US to Be Deported,”](#) by Billal Rahman (August 28, 2025)

“A 20-year-old Honduran woman who has lived in the United States since childhood will reportedly be deported after spending six months in [ICE] custody.”

“Her decision to accept voluntary departure shows that immigrants who grew up in the United States, many with no criminal record, are choosing to leave on their own accord rather than endure months of detention and protracted legal battles. Policy shifts in Washington reverberate among immigrant communities, leading to young people raised in America to return to countries they barely know or remember.”

Article from Fox 13 News (TV station):

- [“Loved ones shocked, worried after beloved Utah violinist detained by ICE,”](#) by Caroleina Hassett (August 23, 2025)

“Shin came to Utah from South Korea when he was 10 years old and has been working his way through the legal system on different visas ever since.”

“The reason Shin was detained remains unknown.”

ICE is detaining US citizens

Article from ProPublica (independent, nonprofit newsroom):

- [“We Found That More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They’ve Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days,”](#) by Nicole Foy (October 16, 2025)

“The government doesn’t track how many citizens are held by immigration agents. We found more than 170 cases this year where citizens were detained at raids and protests.”

“More than 20 citizens have reported being held for over a day without being able to call their loved ones or a lawyer. In some cases their families couldn’t find them.”

Stephen Miller’s quotas are driving ICE to go after grandmas and gardeners

Podcast transcript from *The New Republic* (magazine):

- [“Trump Blurts Out Awkward Truth About ICE as MAGA Seethes”](#)—discussion with with journalist and historian Garrett Graff (July 8, 2025)

“The second Stephen Miller starts to shriek internally that he wants 3,000, 4,000, 5,000 ... arrests a day, [ICE has to] go after the grandmothers. There’s no other way to get the numbers up there. You cannot get the numbers up there unless you go after the grandmothers You can’t get the numbers up by going after criminals, for two reasons. One, there aren’t enough of them. And two, it’s incredibly resource-intensive to go after the criminals. It’s less resource-intensive to go after the abuelas and to deport day laborers from a parking lot at Home Depot.”

ICE is regularly using force on unarmed people, including US citizens

Article from *The Intercept* (online magazine, does investigative journalism) (to read the full

article, you need to enter an email address on their site):

- [“Documenting ICE Agents’ Brutal Use of Force in LA Immigration Raids,”](#) by Jonah Valdez (July 7, 2025)

“Since June 6, federal agents have embarked on a militarized rampage and terror campaign across the greater Los Angeles area.”

“Pursuing the Trump administration’s daily quota of 3,000 arrests, federal agents have ripped through predominantly Latino cities and neighborhoods. ... agents without warrants have abducted day laborers, street vendors, car wash workers, and others”

“Despite the Trump administration’s pledge to target ‘violent criminals,’ the vast majority of those detained do not have criminal records. That has not stopped the government from deploying violence against those in its path.”

“Throughout the first month of its focused operation in and around Los Angeles, federal agents regularly used force against unarmed individuals, many of them U.S. citizens.”

Article from the *Sacramento Bee* (newspaper):

- [“A Los Angeles woman who was 9 months pregnant went into labor prematurely after she was wrongly arrested and assaulted by immigration agents”](#) (August 26, 2025)

“Cary Lopez Alvarado, who is a U.S. citizen, was detained June 8 when she told U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Border Patrol agents that they needed a warrant upon their arrival at a private property in Hawthorne.”

Article from ProPublica (independent, nonprofit newsroom) (same article as quoted above):

- [“We Found That More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They’ve Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days,”](#) by Nicole Foy (October 16, 2025)

"Americans have been dragged, tackled, beaten, tased and shot by immigration agents. They've had their necks kneeled on. They've been held outside in the rain while in their underwear. At least three citizens were pregnant when agents detained them."

ICE is racially profiling people

Article from *Newsweek* (magazine):

- "[Supreme Court to Decide If ICE Can Arrest Based on 'Apparent Ethnicity,'](#)" by Jenna Sundel (August 25, 2025)

"[A] U.S. District Judge [...] issued a temporary restraining order [...], finding the detentions [of several people] likely violated the Fourth Amendment and prohibiting agents [...] from stopping individuals based solely on four factors: apparent race or ethnicity, speaking in Spanish or accented English, presence at a location where illegal immigrants are known to gather and working or appearing to work in a particular type of job."

"[The Trump administration has now] filed an emergency application with the Supreme Court asking the justices to stay the [restraining order, so that federal agents can] continue [to stop people based only on] apparent ethnicity, language, location and place of work."

Followup: On September 8, the Supreme Court granted the Trump administration's request to stay the restraining order, so ICE is now allowed to racially profile people by stopping them based solely on those four factors. But in that context, Justice Kavanaugh [explicitly noted](#) that "apparent ethnicity alone cannot furnish reasonable suspicion" that someone is undocumented.

On a side note, Justice Kavanaugh also wrote: "as for stops of those individuals who are legally in the country, the questioning in those circumstances is typically brief, and those individuals may promptly go free after making clear to the immigration officers that they are U. S. citizens or otherwise legally in the United States." But as noted above, under "ICE is detaining US citizens," ICE often doesn't "promptly" let US citizens go after being given evidence of citizenship.

Longtime ICE employees are demoralized at the change in priorities

Article from *The Atlantic* (magazine):

- [“Trump Loves ICE. Its Workforce Has Never Been So Miserable,”](#) by Nick Miroff (July 10, 2025) (to read the full article, you need to subscribe)

“deportation campaign has left many employees burned out and morally conflicted.”

“Officers and agents have spent much of the past five months clocking weekends and waking up at 4 a.m. for predawn raids. Their top leaders have been ousted or demoted, and their supervisors—themselves under threat of being fired—are pressuring them to make more and more arrests to meet quotas set by the Trump adviser Stephen Miller. Having insisted for years that capturing criminals is its priority, ICE is now shelving major criminal investigations to prioritize civil immigration arrests, grabbing asylum seekers at their courthouse hearings, handcuffing mothers as their U.S.-citizen children cry, chasing day laborers through Home Depot parking lots.”

“Some ICE employees believe that the shift in priorities is driven by a political preoccupation with deportation numbers rather than keeping communities safe. At ICE’s Homeland Security Investigations division, which has long focused on cartels and major drug-trafficking operations, supervisors have waved agents off new cases so they have more time to make immigration-enforcement arrests, a veteran agent told me. ‘No drug cases, no human trafficking, no child exploitation,’ the agent said. ‘It’s infuriating.’ The longtime ICE employee is thinking about quitting rather than having to continue ‘arresting gardeners.’”

ICE is making false claims about protesters

Article from the *Guardian* (newspaper):

- [“Dropped cases against LA protesters reveal false claims from federal agents,”](#) by Sam Levin (July 28, 2025)

"US immigration officers made false and misleading statements in their reports about several Los Angeles protesters they arrested during the massive demonstrations that rocked the city in June, according to federal law enforcement files obtained by the Guardian.

Deporting immigrants will cause big problems for the US food industry

Article from the *Guardian* (newspaper):

- ["How Trump's anti-immigrant policies could collapse the US food industry,"](#) by Rita Liu and Nina Lakhani (July 17, 2025)

"The president is threatening to deport essential farm workers, grocery clerks and food delivery drivers. But without them, shelves could go empty and prices could soar"

"From farm to table, at least one in five jobs in the food industry is carried out by immigrants, the equivalent of 14 million workers across the sector. This includes 27% of agricultural workers nationwide and 33% of meatpackers. In restaurants, 46% of chefs and 31% of cooks were born outside the US – mostly in Mexico, China, Guatemala and El Salvador."

"Yet food industry jobs, from fields to slaughterhouses and supermarkets to delivery drivers, are notoriously difficult and often low-paid: sometimes as little as \$7.25 per hour, the federal minimum wage. Farmhands are often paid only a few dollars per box of tomatoes or cabbages harvested - backbreaking work with no shade."

"If the Trump administration oversees even a fraction of its promised mass deportation of 11 million undocumented immigrants, it could lead to major disruptions across the food system: crops left to spoil in the fields, supermarket shelves unstocked, takeout deliveries delayed and food prices soaring even higher. It could also upend rural economies that depend on migrant workers and their families who live, work and go to school in small declining communities."

ICE is abusing prisoners

Article from the *Guardian* (newspaper):

- ["'Horrific': report reveals abuse of pregnant women and children at US Ice facilities,"](#)
by Michael Sainato (August 6, 2025)

"Report from senator Jon Ossoff's office found 510 credible reports of human rights abuses since Trump's inauguration"

"The alleged abuses uncovered include deaths in custody, physical and sexual abuse of detainees, mistreatment of pregnant women and children, inadequate medical care, overcrowding and unsanitary living conditions, inadequate food and water, exposure to extreme temperatures, denial of access to attorneys, and child separation."