

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 11, 2025

Joseph V. Cuffari
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Troup Hemenway
Acting Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Inspector General Cuffari and Acting Officer Hemenway:

We are troubled by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents' increasingly aggressive and intimidating tactics used during enforcement actions. ICE's conduct has gone beyond simply enforcing the law against people convicted of violent crimes and has subjected community members who pose no threat, including parents and children, to seemingly needless harm. ICE's escalating aggression is not making us safer. We ask that the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) investigate ICE's recent conduct during arrests and take any necessary corrective action.

Over the past month, ICE arrested nearly 1,500 Massachusetts residents during a series of large-scale immigration raids.¹ During these and other recent raids around the country, ICE agents appear to have used increasingly aggressive tactics against community members who pose no threat, including psychological and physical coercion, obfuscation of agent identities and refusal to provide identification upon request, targeting of sensitive locations, and dragnet arrests that sweep in individuals who are not targets, including even U.S. citizens.² In Boston last week, Acting ICE Director Todd Lyons defended the agency's tactics³ — though at least some of this

¹ CBS News, "Nearly 1,500 in Massachusetts detained by ICE in last month. 'We're going to keep coming back,' acting director says," Riley Rourke, June 2, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/ice-massachusetts-raids-todd-lyons-boston/#:~:text=Nearly%201%2C500%20people%20have%20been,Operation%20Patriot%20began%20in%20May>.

² Wall Street Journal: The Journal, "Inside ICE's Aggressive Approach to Arresting Migrants," June 10, 2025, https://www.wsj.com/podcasts/the-journal/inside-ices-aggressive-approach-to-arresting-migrants/73d06674-bba3-487b-91e7-db8c51628ebb?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=ASWzDAhl2tsmupFSR15dQKb4JUcAXwflQAM9X_8yoSAVYDgHoVhM8QdwJ2i5HszGdUY%3D&gaa_ts=684998ac&gaa_sig=tg9FoKXkIzCN-IN-VR4qPk8RHi_aejlLtOAU4dSd4jMR0T9zKRTQNpbXtlKIultcZunbINiCUPDS0obmDrvO1Q%3D%3D; Reuters, "Los Angeles ICE raids fuel controversy over masked agents," Ted Hesson, Tim Reid and Mike Scarcella, June 9, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/los-angeles-ice-raids-fuel-controversy-over-masked-agents-2025-06-09/>; The Guardian, "US citizen detained by immigration officials who dismissed his Real ID as fake," José Olivares, May 24, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/24/us-citizen-detained-ice-real-id>.

³ Associated Press, "Immigration official defends tactics against criticism of a heavy hand as arrests rise nationwide," Leah Willingham, June 2, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/ice-agents-masked-boston-deportations-todd-lyons-4fa874908a64b12f1b1ee0be3825fb39>.

conduct may violate constitutional protections and agency policy.⁴ OIG and CRCL should investigate these troubling reports and ensure that ICE arrests comply with all applicable requirements.

Based on video footage and eye-witness accounts, ICE agents appear to have repeatedly engaged in gratuitous uses of force against people and property. Agents have used military-style gear, including armored vehicles and flash-bang grenades, even to arrest just a single unarmed person and children as young as three years old.⁵ During multiple arrests, agents have smashed car windows and broken doors.⁶ For example, in April 2025, officers used a sledgehammer to break the window of a parked car in New Bedford, Massachusetts, raining shards of glass on a husband and wife who were calmly waiting for their attorney inside the car.⁷ Similarly, in Chelsea, Massachusetts, ICE agents stopped a family leaving church, reportedly held a gun up to the car, then broke the car window and threw the father to the ground to handcuff him.⁸ In some cases, agents have smashed windows in front of young children reportedly while parents pleaded for the agents not to use violence.⁹ Some ICE operations have also involved physical force against children. For example, in Worcester, Massachusetts, local law enforcement forced a teenager to

⁴ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “ICE/DRO Detention Standard – Use of Force and Restraints,” December 2, 2008, https://www.ice.gov/doclib/dro/detention-standards/pdf/use_of_force_and_restraints.pdf; ACLU Illinois, “22 People Arrested in ICE Raids Announce Federal Court Action Challenging Unlawful Warrantless ICE Arrests Under New Trump Administration,” March 17, 2025, <https://www.aclu-il.org/en/press-releases/22-people-arrested-ice-raids-announce-federal-court-action-challenging-unlawful>.

⁵ AZ Central, “Family member condemns use of armored vehicle, stun grenades in Phoenix ICE arrest,” Daniel Gonzalez, February 7, 2025, <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/immigration/2025/02/03/phoenix-ice-arrest-61-year-old-man-involves-armored-vehicle-stun-grenades/78189148007/>; National Public Radio, “An immigration raid at a San Diego restaurant leads to a chaotic scene,” Alina Selyukh, May 31, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/05/31/nx-s1-5418970/san-diego-immigration-raid-restaurant>; CBS 8 San Diego, “Federal immigration agents raid San Diego restaurants,” May 31, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fF1BIU1q3M>; Texas Tribune, “Months after detaining 47 people accused of being Tren de Aragua in Austin, authorities offer no evidence of gang ties,” Alejandro Serrano, June 4, 2025, <https://www.texastribune.org/2025/06/04/texas-immigration-raid-hays-county-austin-venezuelan-gang/>.

⁶ NBC Los Angeles, “Residents alleged excessive force, unwarranted entries during ICE operations in LA County,” Mekahlo Medina, February 28, 2025, <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/ice-operations-spark-controversy-with-allegations-of-excessive-force-and-unwarranted-entries/3643731/>; Fig City News, “Over the line?,” Bruce Henderson, May 6, 2025, <https://figcitynews.com/2025/05/over-the-line/>.

⁷ NBC Boston, “Leaders demand explanation for ICE smashing car window during New Bedford arrest,” Oscar Margain, April 16, 2025, <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/leaders-demand-explanation-for-ice-smashing-car-window-during-new-bedford-arrest/3688081/>.

⁸ NBC Boston, “Video: Feds break SUV window while detaining man after church on Mother's Day,” May 13, 2025, <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/chelsea-massachusetts-ice-broken-window-church/3711419/>.

⁹ NBC San Diego, “City Heights family raises questions after masked ICE agents arrest father in front of kids,” Shelby Bremer, March 17, 2025, <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/ice-arrests-father-in-front-of-children-city-heights/3779515/>; WGBH, “Local immigrant families speak out about the impact of ICE detentions,” Sarah Betancourt, June 2, 2025, <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2025-06-02/local-immigrant-families-speak-out-about-the-impact-of-ice-detentions>.

the ground and held her face to the pavement during an ICE arrest.¹⁰ In another case, ICE agents allegedly zip tied children's hands during an arrest, though DHS denies that claim.¹¹ Alongside physical harm, ICE's tactics have caused psychological terror. Agents have covered their faces with masks, worn plain clothes, and driven unmarked vehicles — including in the infamous case of the Tufts University student, Rumeysa Ozturk, whose arrest at first appeared to be a kidnapping.¹² Meanwhile, some agents have intentionally conveyed false identities, such as a recent case in which agents reportedly posed as utility workers.¹³ This obfuscation not only stokes fear but makes it more difficult for community members to distinguish real agents from impersonators, and kidnappings by civilians posing as ICE officers are on the rise.¹⁴

ICE agents have also become more aggressive in the locations they target. During his first week, President Trump revoked policies protecting sensitive locations and began to allow agents to conduct arrests at schools, places of worship, courthouses, and hospitals.¹⁵ Since then, agents have increasingly camped out at courthouses to arrest individuals released after the adjudication of criminal charges.¹⁶ In at least some cases outside of Massachusetts, agents have reportedly conducted an arrest at a hospital and outside a school.¹⁷

¹⁰ NBC News, "Massachusetts police hold girl's face to the ground as ICE arrests her mother, video shows," Matt Lavietes, May 9, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/massachusetts-police-hold-girls-face-ground-ice-arrests-mother-video-s-rcna205798>; WSFA, "Hundreds protest ICE after agents arrest mother in front of her daughters, grandchild," Emily Maher, May 13, 2025, <https://www.wsfa.com/2025/05/14/hundreds-protest-ice-after-agents-arrest-mother-front-her-daughters-grandchild/>.

¹¹ Newsweek, "DHS Responds to Reports of Children Zip-Tied by ICE Agents," Billal Rahman, June 2, 2025, <https://www.newsweek.com/dhs-children-zip-tied-ice-agents-2079893>.

¹² CNN, "As Trump's immigration crackdown continues, ethics questions are being raised over the use of masked federal agents," Emma Tucker, April 8, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/08/us/ice-masks-federal-agents-arrest-students>.

¹³ AZ Central, "Did ICE agents impersonate utility workers in Tucson? Here's what we know," Sasha Hupka, June 3, 2025, <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/arizona/2025/06/03/did-ice-agents-impersonate-tucson-utility-workers-what-we-know/83952311007/>.

¹⁴ CNN, "Multiple ICE impersonation arrests made during nationwide immigration crackdown," Artemis Moshaghian, Gloria Pazmino, and Nick Valencia, February 5, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/04/us/ice-impersonators-on-the-rise-arrests-made-as-authorities-issue-national-warning>; Newsweek, "ICE Scammers Are On The Rise: What To Do," Billal Rahman, March 21, 2025, <https://www.newsweek.com/ice-scammers-rise-what-do-immigration-2048631>.

¹⁵ KFOX 14, "DHS revokes Biden-era rules, allows ICE and CBP to arrest in schools and churches," Erika Esquivel and Julia Spencer, January 21, 2025, <https://kfoxtv.com/news/local/dhs-revokes-biden-era-rules-allows-ice-and-cbp-to-arrest-in-schools-and-churches>; The Guardian, "Trump says immigration authorities can arrest people at churches and schools," January 21, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/21/trump-ice-churches-schools-hospitals-sensitive-areas>.

¹⁶ New York Times, "How ICE Is Seeking to Ramp Up Deportations Through Courthouse Arrests," Hamed Aleaziz, Luis Ferré-Sadurní, and Miriam Jordan, May 30, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/30/us/politics/ice-courthouse-arrests.html>; GBH, "ICE begins detentions at immigration courts in Boston and Chelmsford," Sarah Betancourt, updated May 28, 2025, <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2025-05-27/ice-begins-detentions-at-immigration-courts-in-boston-and-chelmsford>; CNN, "ICE and other agents conduct at least 12 recent arrests at courthouses. Experts warn some may stop showing up to court," Taylor Galgano and Maria Aguilar Prieto, May 6, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/05/06/us/ice-courthouse-arrests-public-safety>.

¹⁷ The Guardian, "Indonesian student detained by Ice after US secretly revokes his visa," Coral Murphy Marcos, April 19, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/19/aditya-wahyu-harsono-immigration-indonesia>; WBEZ Chicago, "Immigration agents detain a Chicago man during school drop-off, officials say," Sarah Karp and Tom Schuba, February 27, 2025, <https://www.wbez.org/immigration/2025/02/26/immigration-agents-make-arrest-outside-a-chicago-school-during-drop-off-officials-say>.

Furthermore, in what appears to be an effort to ramp up arrest numbers, agents frequently encounter the wrong person yet still proceed with the arrest, which the agency terms “collateral” arrests.¹⁸ For example, ICE agents recently arrested an 18-year-old high school student, Marcelo Gomes Da Silva, who has been a resident of Milford, Massachusetts since age six.¹⁹ Though ICE intended to arrest his father, agents nevertheless proceeded to detain the teenager, who had no pending criminal charges — horrifying his town and communities around the country.²⁰

The Administration claims that it is targeting the “worst first,” and ICE justified that agents had to “go out into communities and look for people” in Massachusetts because local sanctuary city policies left “dangerous criminals” on the streets.²¹ However, almost half of the individuals recently arrested by ICE in Massachusetts have *no* criminal record whatsoever, according to ICE’s own data.²² These seemingly indiscriminate arrests sweep in long-time community members, including young people who have spent almost their entire lives in the United States. Some law enforcement agencies are sounding the alarm that ICE’s tactics actually make their jobs harder by eroding community trust in law enforcement.²³

Already, experts have observed that ICE agents are coming “very close to the line” or even “across the line” of legality with increasing frequency.²⁴ Going forward, ICE may only become

¹⁸ Truthout, “ICE Quietly Pushes Legal Boundaries With So-Called Collateral Arrests,” Vernal Coleman, March 25, 2025, <https://truthout.org/articles/ice-quietly-pushes-legal-boundaries-with-so-called-collateral-arrests/>; Office of Senator Jon Ossoff, “Sen. Ossoff Sounds Alarm That U.S. Citizens Are at Risk of Wrongful Arrest & Deportation,” May 2, 2025, <https://www.ossoff.senate.gov/press-releases/sen-ossoff-sounds-alarm-that-u-s-citizens-are-at-risk-of-wrongful-arrest-deportation/>.

¹⁹ NBC Boston, “ICE detained Mass. high school student while searching for his father, officials say,” Alysha Palumbo and Mary Markos, June 2, 2025, <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/community-demands-answers-after-ice-detains-mass-high-school-student/3729122/>.

²⁰ CBS News, “Milford, Massachusetts rallies to support high school student detained by ICE,” Logan Hall and Paul Burton, June 2, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/massachusetts-maura-healey-demands-answers-milford-student-arrested-by-ice/>; MassLive, “ICE plans to move detained Milford student to R.I., blocking meeting with attorney,” Luis Fieldman, June 4, 2025, <https://www.masslive.com/news/2025/06/ice-plans-to-move-detained-milford-student-to-ri-blocking-meeting-with-attorney.html>; GBH, “‘ICE, please get him out’: Family of detained Milford teen pleads for his release,” Sarah Betancourt, June 4, 2025, <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2025-06-04/ice-please-get-him-out-family-of-detained-milford-teen-pleads-for-his-release>.

²¹ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “100 Days: Protecting America from the Worst First,” updated April 29, 2025, <https://www.ice.gov/100days>; WBUR, “ICE, U.S. Attorney say 1,500 arrested in Mass. during immigration enforcement in May,” Amy Gorel and Simon Rios, June 2, 2025, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/06/02/massachusetts-federal-immigration-arrests>.

²² CBS News, “Nearly 1,500 in Massachusetts detained by ICE in last month. ‘We’re going to keep coming back,’ acting director says,” Riley Rourke, June 2, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/ice-massachusetts-raids-todd-lyons-boston/>.

²³ National Public Radio, “Police say ICE tactics are eroding public trust in local law enforcement,” Meg Anderson, March 30, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/30/nx-s1-5304236/police-say-ice-tactics-are-eroding-public-trust-in-local-law-enforcement>; 10 WBNS, “Democratic lawmakers, advocates speak about impact of Trump’s immigration policy on legal immigrants,” Doug Petcash, February 11, 2025, <https://www.10tv.com/article/news/politics/democratic-lawmakers-advocates-say-trump-policies-causing-fear-immigrant-community/530-9ec6efdc-f5ce-4119-9aa5-cb77ecf88829>.

²⁴ WBUR, “Do ICE agents need a warrant to make arrests? Often the answer is no,” Simón Rios, May 23, 2025, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/05/22/ice-warrants-arrest-rules-massachusetts>.

more aggressive as agents are pushed to meet ICE's new arrest quota of 3,000 per day — triple the number from earlier this year.²⁵

The human toll of these tactics is immense.²⁶ Families are being separated, and citizen and noncitizen community members alike are left living in fear.²⁷ In light of these reports of ICE's potential violations of agency policy and constitutional rights, we ask that DHS OIG and CRCL review these matters. This review should seek to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Please describe and provide a copy of ICE's current policies regarding use of military-style equipment, face coverings during arrests, the number of agents who should be involved in arresting a single individual, and disclosure of agent identities during arrests.
2. What directives, if any, have been issued to ICE agents regarding appropriate and inappropriate tactics since January 20, 2025?
3. Under what circumstances is DHS sending agents from Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) to make immigration arrests?
4. What is DHS's rationale for the use of military-style gear during ICE arrests?
5. How many enforcement operations since January 20, 2025 resulted in "collateral" arrests?
6. How many minors have been arrested by ICE since January 20, 2025?
7. Was the May 2025 ICE operation in Massachusetts or any other recent ICE operation planned or implemented in direct response to sanctuary policies or political decisions made by Massachusetts municipalities?
8. What internal safeguards exist to prevent immigration enforcement from being used as a tool for retaliation against critics, dissenters, or political opponents?
9. How has the downsizing of DHS's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) impacted the Department's ability to oversee ICE agents' conduct?

²⁵ The Guardian, "Trump administration sets quota to arrest 3,000 people a day in anti-immigration agenda," José Olivares, May 29, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/29/trump-ice-arrest-quota>.

²⁶ AJMC, "Trump's Immigration Crackdown Fuels Health Crisis: Detention, Depression, Deportation, and Disease," Cameron Santoro, March 5, 2025, <https://www.ajmc.com/view/trump-s-immigration-crackdown-fuels-health-crisis-detention-depression-deportation-and-disease>; The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, "The Human Costs of Trump's Immigration Crackdown," Emelynn Arroyave and Oprah Cunningham, February 14, 2025, <https://civilrights.org/blog/the-human-costs-of-trumps-immigration-crackdown/>.

²⁷ Asian American Advancing Justice, "Children's Groups Outraged by Deportation of U.S. Citizen Children without Due Process," April 29, 2025, <https://www.advancingjustice-aaajc.org/press-release/childrens-groups-outraged-deportation-us-citizen-children-without-due-process>; Washington Post, "Three U.S. citizens, ages 2, 4 and 7, swiftly deported from Louisiana," Emmanuel Felton and Maegan Vazquez, April 26, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2025/04/26/us-citizen-children-deported-ice/>.

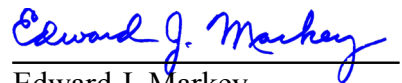
10. After the Trump Administration’s attempt to close the office,²⁸ CRCL’s website now states: “The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties continues to exist and will perform its statutorily required functions.”²⁹ Please provide the current number of staff at CRCL, the number of open enforcement actions, the budget available for the office, and your assessment of whether the office can effectively perform its duties.

We remain committed to ensuring that immigration enforcement in this country aligns with our nation’s legal obligations and moral principles. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



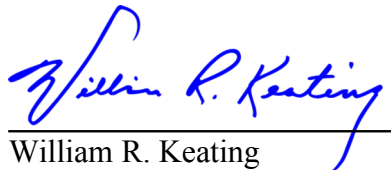
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



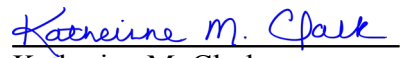
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

²⁸ ProPublica, ““They Don’t Care About Civil Rights”: Trump’s Shuttering of DHS Oversight Arm Freezes 600 Cases, Imperils Human Rights,” J. David McSwane and Hannah Allam, April 8, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/homeland-security-crcl-civil-rights-immigration-border-patrol-trump-kristi-noem>; Federal News Network, “DHS plans for skinny staffs at civil liberties, oversight offices,” Justin Doubleday, May 26, 2025, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/05/dhs-plans-for-skinny-staffs-at-civil-liberties-oversight-offices/>.

²⁹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties,” last updated May 23, 2025, <https://www.dhs.gov/office-civil-rights-and-civil-liberties>.



Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



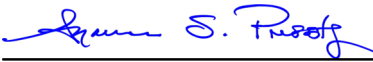
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