

LOSS AND RESISTANCE:

LOS ANGELES ONE YEAR INTO TRUMP'S IMMIGRATION AGENDA

Immigrants' Rights Policy Clinic
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Introduction

The second Trump Administration has aggressively pursued an immigration agenda that both keeps newcomers out of the United States and rushes to expel noncitizens who are present in the country.

To carry out a big part of this agenda, the Administration has unleashed a flurry of new immigration enforcement policies. These policies build on one another to expand interior enforcement, increase the likelihood of detention, and diminish access to relief.

Now more than ever, people are being funneled into the immigration enforcement system. Once there, and with little access to legal help and dwindling due process protections, many noncitizens are unable to remain in the United States even when existing federal laws may allow them to stay.

The impacts of these policies have been felt acutely in Los Angeles, home to one of the largest immigrant populations in the country.

“It’s not really a matter of ‘if’ I’m going to get detained. It almost feels like the question is ‘when’ will it happen. Enforcement is getting very close to home.”

– Ana¹

This white paper explores the consequences of the first year of the Trump Administration’s immigration policies, with particular emphasis on Los Angeles. Its focus is on the impacts of policy changes across the following domains: interior enforcement, detention, and the immigration courts. The paper’s analysis is guided by three simple but crucial questions:

- (1) What has happened in Los Angeles?
- (2) Why has it happened?
- (3) How has Los Angeles responded?

Our findings underscore how the Administration’s policies have increased arrests, expanded detention, and limited noncitizens’ due process rights in Los Angeles and beyond, all in service of an agenda that prioritizes increased deportation numbers over following the law. It is crucial to emphasize that the effects discussed here are not

¹ Interview with Ana, 23-year-old Los Angeles resident (Mar. 2, 2026). Name changed to preserve anonymity.

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independent of each other. Rather, the changes are cumulative and interact to advance the Administration's anti-immigrant agenda.

But the Administration's policies have not gone unanswered. Rather, our research highlights how Los Angeles residents, advocates, and government institutions have responded by creating a community of support for immigrants. In uplifting Los Angeles's resilience, this paper hopes to push Angelenos to continue strengthening support and to inspire other localities to do the same—recognizing that the battle being waged over immigration today is also a fight to defend the democratic values necessary to protect us all.

Our Approach

To convey how the second Trump Administration's policies have affected Los Angeles, this paper draws on a combination of policy analysis, quantitative data, in-depth interviews, and court observations.

The quantitative data used in this paper is data collected by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including its sub-agency U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE, for instance, tracks enforcement activities such as arrests, detention, and removals.

Much of this data has been obtained through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests (and related litigation) by advocacy organizations and research initiatives, including the Deportation Data Project (DDP).² The DDP then makes these datasets accessible in a more user-friendly format by processing and organizing them. Dr. Henry Kim of the Empirical Research Group at the UCLA School of Law assisted in analyzing this data, with input from Dr. Graeme Blair, who is co-director of the DDP.

To assess how enforcement patterns have changed across administrations, this paper compares data from the Biden and Trump administrations. In most cases, it uses time periods of equal length: January 20, 2024 through January 19, 2025 for the final year of the Biden Administration, and January 20, 2025 through January 19, 2026 for the first

² DEPORTATION DATA PROJECT, *About*, <https://deportationdata.org/about.html> (explaining that the project collects and publishes immigration enforcement datasets obtained through FOIA requests, litigation, and government disclosures); Citlalli Chávez-Nava, *Deportation Data Project from UCLA and UC Berkeley Helps Draw Clearer Picture of Recent Immigration Crackdowns*, UCLA NEWSROOM (July 11, 2025), <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/deportation-data-project-immigration-arrests-statistics-ucla-uc-berkeley>.

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year of the second Trump Administration. Using matched time periods allowed for a more consistent comparison of enforcement trends. However, for certain data analysis questions, this paper focuses exclusively on data from the second Trump Administration. Any other time frames analyzed are noted explicitly.

The Clinic team also conducted five in-depth interviews between February and March 2026 with attorneys, advocates, and two impacted community members. The interviews added qualitative insights into how policy changes are experienced in practice. The interviews also contextualized broader trends identified in the quantitative and policy analysis.

The court observations referenced in this paper were conducted by UCLA Law clinical students, who observed a total of 15 immigration court proceedings between February and April 2026. These observations supplement the data and qualitative interviews by exploring how policy changes affect courtroom practice, especially by undermining procedural fairness.

What Has Happened in Los Angeles?

“[A] guy knocks on the door, and he's like, ‘We're here to escort you.’ As I'm in the stairwell...[f]ive armed ICE officers, just grabbed me, slammed me to a wall [without saying anything].

And then I hear [my attorney] scream at the back, you know, ‘You can't do that. He's deferred action. You can't do that. That's illegal.’

[T]hey chained me up. They chained my legs, my hands, my neck, everything...I was genuinely so confused, you know. I thought this was like a big misunderstanding, you know.”

- Omar³

This is the story of Omar, a 19-year-old Angeleno who was arrested by ICE during the 2025 immigration crackdown in Los Angeles. His experience reflects a broader shift in how ICE has carried out immigration enforcement in Los Angeles and beyond.

Since January 2025, Los Angeles—along with the rest of the country—has seen a sharp increase in immigration arrests and a significant expansion of immigration detention.

³ Interview with Omar, 19-year-old Los Angeles resident (Mar. 20, 2026). Name changed to preserve anonymity.

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The period has also seen a growing number of deportations, whether through government-imposed deportation processes, or individual decisions to leave the United States—sometimes called “self-deportation”—driven by the climate of fear surrounding immigration enforcement.

At the national level, immigration arrests increased dramatically during the first year of the second Trump Administration, roughly quadrupling compared to the last six months of the Biden Administration.⁴ At the same time, the number of individuals held in immigration detention rose sharply, increasing from approximately 40,000 in January 2025 to roughly 66,000 by November that year.⁵

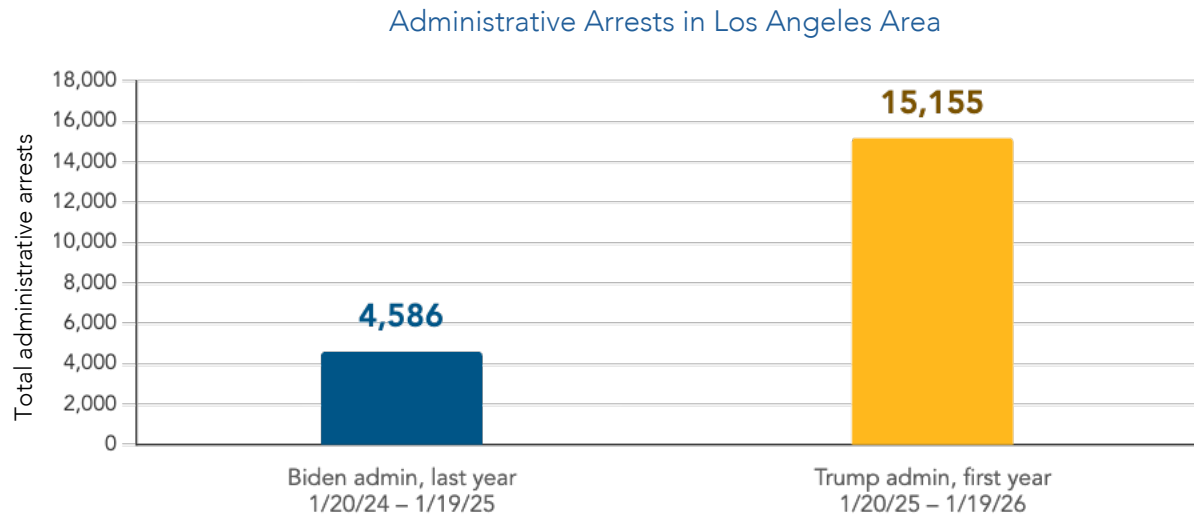
Los Angeles has experienced this shift in particularly acute and visible ways. Working with data provided by the Deportation Data Project, our analysis shows that in the first year of the second Trump Administration, apprehensions in the Los Angeles tripled over the final year of the Biden Administration.⁶

⁴ Graeme Blair & David Hausman, *One Year of Immigration Enforcement Under the Second Trump Administration*, DEPORTATION DATA PROJECT (Apr. 7, 2026), <https://deportationdata.org/analysis/immigration-enforcement-first-year.html>.

⁵ Camilo Montoya-Galvez, *ICE's Detainee Population Reaches 66,000, a New Record High, Statistics Show*, CBS NEWS (Nov. 6, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ices-detainee-population-reaches-66000-a-new-record-high-statistics-show/>; see also AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, *Immigration Detention Expansion in Trump's Second Term* (Jan. 14, 2026), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/immigration-detention/>; Chris Cameron & Hamed Aleaziz, *Over 60,000 Are in Immigration Detention, a Modern High, Records Show*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 11, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/11/us/politics/immigration-detention-numbers.html>.

⁶ This analysis is based on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) data on “Administrative arrests” obtained through the Deportation Data Project. The arrest data “[r]ecords every time ICE arrests someone, whether or not that arrest results in a decision to detain the person.” DEPORTATION DATA PROJECT, *Administrative Arrests*, <https://ice-arrests.apps.deportationdata.org/>. Because of limitations in the way that ICE keeps its geographic data, the “Los Angeles area” described herein and references to Los Angeles data drawn from the Deportation Data Project throughout this paper encompass data from ICE’s “Los Angeles Area of Responsibility,” which includes the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. See U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF’T, *Los Angeles Field Office*, <https://www.ice.gov/field-office/los-angeles-field-office>.

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Source: Deportation Data Project

This increase reflects a substantial and rapid escalation in enforcement activity, including an intense wave of ICE raids across Los Angeles during the summer of 2025. At the height of these operations, 2,453 individuals were arrested in June 2025 and 1,940 in July 2025.⁷

As arrests increased, detention expanded. In the Los Angeles region, the Adelanto ICE Processing Center and the nearby Desert View Annex serve as the primary detention sites.⁸ Adelanto, the larger of the two, underwent a rapid transformation in 2025, shifting from being near-empty throughout 2024—often detaining fewer than 10 individuals—to holding over 1,500 people by mid-2025.⁹ Detention levels at Desert View

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ The Adelanto ICE Processing Center and the Desert View Annex are both located in Adelanto, California, approximately 85 miles northeast of Los Angeles. See U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF'T, *Adelanto ICE Processing Center*, <https://www.ice.gov/detain/detention-facilities/adelanto-ice-processing-center>; U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF'T, *Desert View Annex*, <https://www.ice.gov/detain/detention-facilities/desert-view-annex>.

⁹ CAL. DEPT. OF JUSTICE, *Immigration Detention in California: A Review of Conditions of Confinement* (May 2026), pp. 5-6, <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/immigration-detention-2026.pdf>. See also Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, *Detention Facilities Average Daily Population*, <https://tracreports.org/immigration/detentionstats/facilities.html>. Detention levels at the Adelanto ICE Processing Center were significantly reduced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic due to court-ordered depopulation measures and related litigation challenging detention conditions. See Complaint for Damages, Injunctive Relief, and Declaratory Relief, *Hernandez Roman v. Wolf*, Case No. 8:20-cv-01580, ECF No. 1 (C.D. Cal. filed Aug. 24, 2020), https://www.law.uci.edu/news/press-releases/2020/irc-Hernandez-Roman_Complaint-08242020.pdf. In October 2020, a federal court ordered Adelanto to reduce its detainee population and barred the facility from accepting new or transfer detainees until it could maintain six feet of

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remained relatively stable over the same period. Together, these trends reflect a rise in enforcement activity that relies on detention in large-scale, centralized, and privately-run prison-like facilities.¹⁰

This shift has had significant implications for people navigating the immigration system. Many individuals are detained at facilities located far from the communities in which they were arrested.¹¹ As the government funnels more and more people into detention, they face difficult living conditions and increased barriers to accessing legal counsel, gathering evidence, and maintaining contact with family members.

In this way, detention operates not only as a mechanism of custody, but as a condition that shapes the course and outcome of immigration proceedings. Especially troubling are the barriers that detained people face in arguing for their rights under federal law when they are detained in harsh conditions that separate them, often by thousands of miles, from attorneys, family, and community.

These dynamics are reflected in the outcomes of cases. As enforcement intensified in the summer of 2025, the number of individuals accepting “voluntary” departure or return rose sharply.¹² Voluntary departures and returns in Los Angeles increased more than one-hundred-fold compared to 2024.¹³ This surge suggests that increased enforcement is not only leading to more arrests and detentions, but also that it is

social distancing throughout the facility. See Modified Preliminary Injunction, *Roman v. Wolf*, Case No. 5:20-cv-00768-TJH-PVC, ECF No. 596 (C.D. Cal. filed Oct. 2, 2020), <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/AdelantoCovid-PI.pdf>.

¹⁰ See AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, *Immigration Detention Expansion in Trump's Second Term* (Jan. 2026), p.7, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/immigration-detention-report.pdf> (noting that “roughly 90 percent” of individuals in ICE detention were held in facilities owned or operated by private prison companies as of early 2025).

¹¹ *Id.* at 30–31, 37 (describing how transfers to distant detention facilities impede access to counsel and separate detained individuals from their support systems).

¹² We use the term “voluntary departure or return” here to refer to mechanisms through which individuals agree to depart the United States in lieu of receiving a removal order. See, e.g., 8 U.S.C. § 1229c. The use of this term here does not refer to broader forms of “self-deportation” occurring outside of immigration proceedings. See, e.g., U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF'T, *Self-Deportation*, <https://www.ice.gov/self-deportation> (urging immigrants to “self-deport”).

¹³ This estimate is based on ICE data on “Administrative arrests” obtained through the Deportation Data Project, whose case categories include a “voluntary departure” or voluntary return “under safeguards.” DEPORTATION DATA PROJECT, *Administrative Arrests*, <https://ice-arrests.apps.deportationdata.org/>.

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exerting pressure on individuals to agree to leave the country even before their case is decided.¹⁴

But these numbers tell only part of the story. Interviews with advocates, community members, and legal service providers in Los Angeles revealed how the Administration's anti-immigrant agenda has generated a pervasive climate of fear and instability that extends far beyond formal enforcement and court decisions.

People fear going to work. School enrollment has dropped as children and parents fear traveling to and from school.¹⁵ Businesses have shuttered because workers and customers alike are afraid to leave their homes.¹⁶ Immigration courts, too, have increasingly come to be viewed not as places of adjudication, but as sites of enforcement when ICE arrests people who attend hearings in their cases.¹⁷

“It feels like [the Administration] is going after anyone and everyone.”

- Omar¹⁸

Los Angeles is not alone in feeling the impacts of the second Trump Administration's immigration agenda. But understanding why that agenda is playing out in the way that it is in Los Angeles—and how Angelenos have responded—is crucial to making sense of this moment, not just for Los Angeles but also for the rest of the country.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Jamiles Larty, *Bad Food. Poor Care. No Toilets. ICE Detention Misery Pushes Immigrants to 'Voluntarily' Depart.*, THE MARSHALL PROJECT (May 30, 2026), <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2026/05/30/ice-trump-new-jersey-detention>.

¹⁵ Howard Blume & Kate Payne, *School enrollment drops amid ICE raids. 'We just don't know what happened to them.'* L.A. TIMES (Nov. 29, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-11-29/school-enrollment-plummets-laUSD-amid-trump-immigration-raids> (reporting that in L.A. Unified School District, which has nearly 400,000 students, the difference in 2025 between the anticipated decline and the actual decline was more than 7,000 students).

¹⁶ Shannon M. Sedgwick et. al., *Economic Impacts of Federal Immigration Enforcement in Los Angeles County*, LOS ANGELES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (Jan. 2026), pp. iii-iv, <https://opportunity.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/LAEDCxDEO-Economic-Impacts-of-Federal-Immigration-Enforcement.pdf> (explaining 82% of Los Angeles County business owners report being negatively impacted by increased federal enforcement actions, including by revenue loss and decrease in traffic due to climate of fear).

¹⁷ See, e.g., Ben Camacho, *LA Immigration courts have become hunting grounds for ICE agents*, L.A. PUBLIC PRESS (Aug. 18, 2025), <https://lapublicpress.org/2025/08/la-immigration-courts-have-become-hunting-grounds-for-ice-agents/>.

¹⁸ Interview with Omar, 19-year-old Los Angeles resident (Mar. 20, 2026).

Why Has It Happened?

What has happened in Los Angeles is no accident. It is the intended consequence of several key policy changes by the second Trump Administration to advance its anti-immigrant agenda.

Taken together, these policy changes have resulted in greater numbers of arrests, increased reliance on detention, and diminishing access to due process protections. In effect, the policies expand the reach of immigration enforcement while simultaneously making it more difficult for individuals to meaningfully challenge removal or to pursue relief for which they are eligible under federal immigration law.

Interior Immigration Enforcement Unleashed

Though much of the Trump campaign rhetoric focused on “protecting” the border,¹⁹ many of the Administration’s immigration policies adopted in 2025 have targeted people living within the United States—both newcomers beginning to build lives here as they seek humanitarian protection as well as decades-long residents of the country.

These policies have funneled billions of dollars to enforcement in U.S. cities and states, loosened or eliminated legal constraints on how such enforcement is carried out, and significantly broadened the number of people subject to arrest, detention, and deportation with little or no due process.

Explosion of Funds

ICE is the federal agency within DHS responsible for arresting, detaining, and removing individuals in cities, like Los Angeles, that are in the interior of the United States.²⁰ Unsurprisingly, the Administration has undertaken numerous policy changes that fund

¹⁹ Jonathan Swan et al., *Trump Thinks the Border Got Him Elected in 2016. He’s Convinced It Will Do So Again.*, N.Y. TIMES, (Oct. 19, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/19/us/politics/trump-immigration-closing-message.html> (quoting Trump as saying: “After years of building up other countries, we will protect our borders, defend our families and protect our American suburbs, cities and towns”).

²⁰ U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF’T, *About Us*, <https://www.ice.gov/about-ice> (last visited June 30, 2026). Notably, ICE has also increasingly collaborated with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the DHS sub-agency that has typically confined its operations to the border, to carry out enforcement operations in the interior of the United States as well. See, e.g., Melissa Cruz, *Why You’re Seeing Border Patrol in Places Like Charlotte and Atlanta, So Far From the Border*, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL (Nov. 25, 2025), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/border-patrol-charlotte-atlanta-100-mile-zone/>.

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immigration enforcement at unprecedented levels, allowing for spendthrift enforcement at the expense of many other government priorities.

For the past several years, ICE had an already significant operating budget of nearly \$10 billion per year.²¹ But in July 2025, the agency's annual budget tripled in the blink of an eye. Congress, at the Administration's behest, approved a bill providing an additional \$75 billion in supplemental funding for ICE operations that is available until the end of September 2029.²² Of this total, \$45 billion is earmarked for expanding the detention system,²³ and approximately \$30 billion is for hiring additional ICE personnel, the costs of deportation, and other aspects of expanded enforcement.²⁴ With these new funds, ICE promptly went on a hiring spree, more than doubling the number of its officers.²⁵ And the money keeps coming. In June 2026, Congress approved another \$70 billion dollars in funding for ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)—another DHS agency typically responsible for border enforcement—through the end of President Trump's second term.²⁶

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

²² *Id.*; see An Act to Provide for Reconciliation Pursuant to Title II of H. Con. Res. 14, Pub. L. No. 119–21, 139 Stat. 72 (2025). In total, the bill included over \$170 billion for increased immigration enforcement, including significant allocations to CBP and the Department of Defense for expanded border security and technology. See AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, *What's in the Big Beautiful Bill? Immigration and Border Security Unpacked* (July 14, 2025), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/big-beautiful-bill-immigration-border-security/>.

²³ Pub. L. No. 119–21 at § 90003(a).

²⁴ *Id.* at § 100052.

²⁵ U.S. DEP'T OF HOMELAND SECURITY, *ICE Announces Historic 120% Manpower Increase, Thanks to Recruitment Campaign that Brought in 12,000 Officers and Agents* (Jan. 3, 2026), <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2026/01/03/ice-announces-historic-120-manpower-increase-thanks-recruitment-campaign-brought>.

²⁶ Justin Papp, *Trump signs \$70 billion immigration funding bill after months of delay*, CNBC (June 10, 2026), <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/06/10/trump-ice-70-billion-immigration-funding.html>; Alexander Bolton, *Republicans see path forward on reconciliation after administration backs down on 'anti-weaponization' fund*, THE HILL (June 2, 2026), <https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/5904816-gop-senators-reconciliation-anti-weaponization-fund/>; see also AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, *Senate Pushes Ahead with \$70 Billion More for ICE and CBP, Excluding Accountability Measures* (May 8, 2026), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/senate-pushes-70-billion-funding-ice-cbp-accountability-measures/> (analyzing the proposed reconciliation bill, including \$38.2 billion for ICE to expand and sustain enforcement operations, \$26 billion for CBP to hire and equip personnel and upgrade surveillance, \$5 billion for DHS to fund several broad purposes, and \$1.5 billion for DOJ to enforce and administer immigration laws).

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Enforcement Without Guardrails

This explosion in funds and staffing came alongside policies that purport to let ICE conduct immigration enforcement without guardrails to ensure compliance with federal statutes and the U.S. Constitution. For example, under previous administrations, certain spaces such as schools, hospitals, and places of worship were considered “sensitive locations” or “protected areas” generally free of ICE enforcement.²⁷ Similarly, enforcement action at or near a courthouse was typically allowed only under extreme circumstances, such as “an imminent risk of death, violence, or physical harm to any person.”²⁸

This Administration’s approach is far different. Now, ICE claims authority to conduct enforcement actions in previously protected areas if “common sense” allows and to act at or near courthouses when an officer has “credible information that leads them to believe the targeted [noncitizen] is or will be present at a specific location.”²⁹ Shortly after this policy change, immigration agents attempted to enter two Los Angeles elementary schools claiming permission to speak with students—an incident that struck fear among teachers and families.³⁰ In Los Angeles—as elsewhere in the country—this

²⁷ See U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF’T, *Enforcement Actions at or Focused on Sensitive Locations* (Oct. 24, 2011), https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/policy/10029.2_EnforcementActionsFocusedSensitiveLocations_10.24.2011.pdf; see also U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SECURITY, *Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas* (Oct. 27, 2021), <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/news/guidelines-civilimmigrationlaw10272021.pdf>

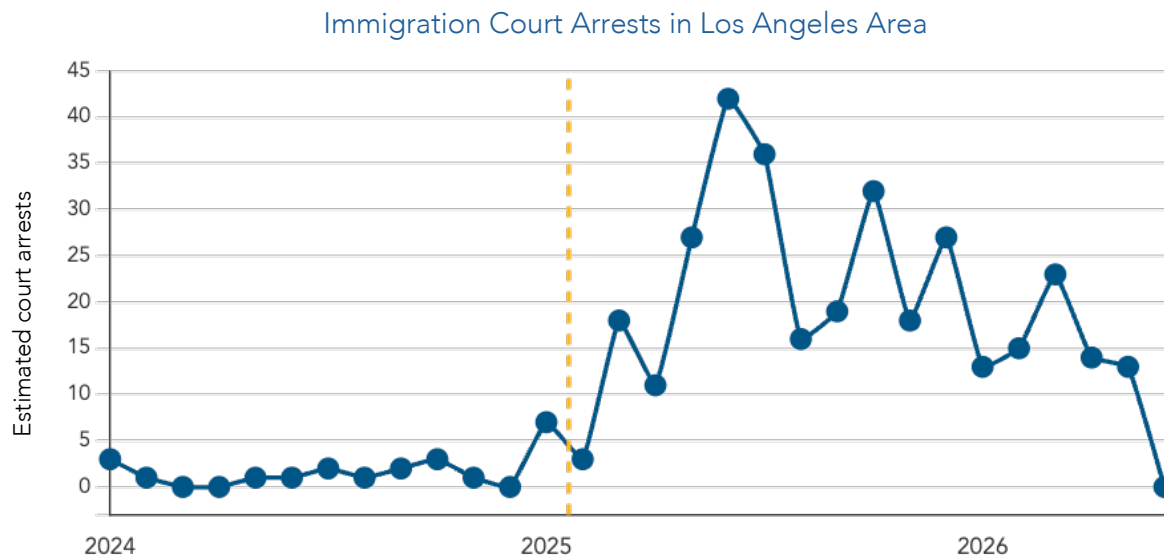
²⁸ U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SECURITY, *Civil Immigration Enforcement Actions in or near Courthouses*, 2 (Apr. 21, 2021), <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2021-Apr/Enforcement-Actions-in-Courthouses-04-26-21.pdf>.

²⁹ U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SECURITY, *Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas* (Jan. 20, 2025), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/25_0120_S1_enforcement-actions-in-near-protected-areas.pdf; U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF’T, *Interim Guidance: Civil Immigration Enforcement Actions in or near Courthouse* (Jan. 2025), https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/policy/11072.3_CivilImmEnfActionsCourthouses_01.21.2025.pdf. On June 23, 2026, a federal district court found that ICE’s courthouse arrest policies were arbitrary and capricious in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and vacated them. See Order re Motions for Class Certification and Summary Judgement, *Pablo Sequen, et al. v. Albarran*, Case No. 5:25-cv-06487-PCP, ECF No. 205, 2026 WL 1805114 (N.D. Cal. filed June 23, 2026), available at <https://www.aclunorcal.org/cases/pablo-sequen-v-albarran/?document=Ruling-Order-re-Motions-for-Class-Certification-and-Summary-Judgement>. The Trump administration is likely to appeal that decision.

³⁰ See Naaz Modan, *ICE agents denied entry into LAUSD elementary schools*, K-12 DIVE (Apr. 14, 2025), <https://www.k12dive.com/news/DHS-ICE-HSI-LAUSD-immigration-enforcement-elementary->

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shift also led to immigration courts becoming what one observer described as “hunting grounds” for ICE agents in 2025, when ICE started to arrest people who showed up for their court hearings.³¹ Between January 2025 and March 2026, ICE arrested over 300 people in Los Angeles area immigration courts.³²



Source: Deportation Data Project

[school/745303/](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/14/us/los-angeles-raids-school-patrols.html); Jill Cowan & Orlando Mayorquín, *In L.A., Fear of ICE Raids Created a Tense First Day of School*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 14, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/14/us/los-angeles-raids-school-patrols.html>.

³¹ See Ben Camacho, *LA Immigration courts have become hunting grounds for ICE agents*, L.A. PUBLIC PRESS (Aug. 18, 2025), <https://lapublicpress.org/2025/08/la-immigration-courts-have-become-hunting-grounds-for-ice-agents/>.

³² This estimate is based on Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR)’s “CASE” dataset obtained through the Deportation Data Project. See DEPORTATION DATA PROJECT, *Executive Office for Immigration Review (Immigration Courts)*, <https://deportationdata.org/data/processed/eoir.html>. The analysis combines information from EOIR’s “proceedings,” “hearings,” and “custody history” tables to estimate the number of arrests of individuals appearing for an immigration court hearing at a Los Angeles area immigration courthouse. This number may undercount individuals where EOIR did not independently record arrest data or where an individual was placed into expedited removal proceedings (outside of immigration court), thereby stopping updates to EOIR’s CASE dataset prior to arrest. It may also miscount some individuals who were arrested shortly after, but not the day of, their immigration court hearings or where a hearing took place shortly after a book-in to detention.

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Relatedly, the use of “roving patrols” in neighborhoods has become a commonplace ICE enforcement tactic.³³ ICE has stopped people based on factors such as apparent race or ethnicity, for speaking Spanish or speaking English with an accent, or because they happen to be or work at a location that ICE thinks is associated with undocumented people.³⁴ This tactic led to the surge in arrests in Los Angeles in summer 2025, followed by similarly violent operations in Chicago, Charlotte, and Minneapolis among other places in the months that followed.³⁵

With the Administration having gutted accountability mechanisms for ICE enforcement actions by instituting large-scale layoffs at watchdog agencies within DHS, aggressive ICE enforcement tactics have become the norm.³⁶

Widening the Dragnet

In order to reach its interior enforcement goals, the Administration has not only flooded ICE with funding and eliminated constraints on its enforcement tactics—it has also adopted policies to significantly expand the number of people living in Los Angeles

³³ See Complaint, *Vasquez Perdomo v. Noem*, Case No. 2:25-cv-05605, ECF No. 16 (C.D. Cal. filed July 2, 2025), <https://www.aclusocal.org/cases/vasquez-perdomo-v-noem/?document=Plaintiffs-file-complaint-against-DHS#documents> (challenging the constitutionality of “roving patrols” conducted across Los Angeles and surrounding communities); Brittny Mejia & Rachel Uranga, *Fears of racial profiling rise as Border Patrol conducts ‘roving patrols,’ detains U.S. citizens*, L.A. TIMES (June 15, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-06-15/latinos-targeted-in-raids-u-s-citizens-detained-indiscriminate-sweeps-home-depot-lots-targeted>.

³⁴ *Vasquez Perdomo v. Noem*, 790 F. Supp. 3d. 850, 890, 897 (C.D. Cal. July 11, 2025).

³⁵ See Caitlin McTiernan, *Illinois Commission Finds Federal Misconduct During Operation Midway Blitz*, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL (May 18, 2026), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/chicago-illinois-commission-operation-midway-blitz-immigration/> (finding that “[f]ederal officials did not prioritize targeted enforcement as part of Operation Midway Blitz. Instead, roving patrols of federal officers flooded Chicago streets, arresting people based solely on their race or language spoken.”); Eduardo Medina and Bernard Mokam, *U.S. Border Patrol Launches Operation in Charlotte*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 15, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/15/us/us-border-patrol-charlotte-nc-immigration.html> (citing interviews of people being racially profiled by border patrol agents); Camilo Montoya-Galvez and Joe Walsh, *Minneapolis becomes ground zero in Trump’s immigration crackdown: Arrests, protests and 2 fatal shootings by agents*, CBS NEWS (Jan. 26, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/minneapolis-trump-immigration-ice-border-patrol-arrests-protests-shootings/> (reporting on the fatal shooting of Alex Pretti occurring less than three weeks after Renee Good was shot and killed by ICE in Minneapolis).

³⁶ See Rebecca Beitsch, *Trump topples civil rights offices at DHS*, THE HILL (Mar. 21, 2025), <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5208342-dhs-eliminates-civil-rights-office/> (reporting firings of staff at the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman); Ximena Bustillo, *DHS blames funding lapse for shutdown of internal detention oversight*, NPR (May 7, 2026), <https://www.npr.org/2026/05/07/g-s1-120834/trump-immigration-detention-ombudsman-shutdown> (reporting that the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman was shut down).

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and other places within the United States who can be pulled into the enforcement and deportation system.³⁷

Closely related to this expansion of the enforcement dragnet is the broader application of expedited removal to deny due process. Expedited removal is exactly what it sounds like: the arrest and quick removal of an individual without a court hearing.³⁸ An immigration officer—not a judge—makes the threshold determination as to whether an individual is subject to expedited removal or not.

For over two decades, expedited removal applied only to noncitizens who: 1) entered the United States without inspection, 2) were found within two weeks of arrival, and 3) were found within 100 miles of the border.³⁹ But starting in mid-2025, the Administration has applied expedited removal to non-citizens who: 1) entered the U.S. without inspection and 2) cannot prove that they have been physically present in the U.S. for the past two years.⁴⁰ This allows ICE to arrest individuals anywhere in the United States and deport them without a hearing simply because the officer thinks the individual entered without inspection in the past two years.

The Administration has also made more people subject to immigration enforcement through the stripping of lawful status. Since January 2025, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a form of humanitarian relief, has been terminated for nationals of countries like Haiti, Venezuela, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Somalia, and Myanmar, who have held this status for years. The result has been to strip legal status from over one million people.⁴¹

³⁷ See Nick Miroff & Maria Sacchetti, *Trump officials issue quotas to ICE officers to ramp up arrests*, WASHINGTON POST (Jan. 26, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2025/01/26/ice-arrests-raids-trump-quota/> (reporting daily arrest goal of 1,200 in early 2025); José Olivares, *Trump administration sets quota to arrest 3,000 people a day in anti-immigration agenda*, THE GUARDIAN (May 29, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/29/trump-ice-arrest-quota> (reporting daily arrest goal of 3,000 in May 2025).

³⁸ INA § 235(b)(1)(A)(i).

³⁹ Hillel R. Smith, *The Department of Homeland Security's Authority to Expand Expedited Removal*, CONG. RESEARCH SERV. (Sept. 18, 2025), <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/LSB10336#:~:text=Federal%20law%20authorizes%20the,admission%20through%20fraud%20or%20misrepresentation.>

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ Ariana Figueroa, *Trump canceled temporary legal status for more than 1.5 million immigrants in 2025*, WLRN PUBLIC MEDIA (Dec. 29, 2025), <https://www.wlrn.org/immigration/2025-12-29/trump-canceled-temporary-legal-status-for-more-than-1-5-million-immigrants-in-2025>.

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In March 2025, the Administration abruptly ended a humanitarian parole pathway for people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. This stripped lawful status from over 500,000 people who were in the United States with government permission because of urgent conditions in those countries.⁴² By January 2026, the Administration had also revoked about 8,000 student visas.⁴³

More recently, the Administration announced its intent to make it significantly more difficult for people living in the United States to become lawful permanent residents through family members, employment or other means, while remaining in the United States. The consequence is that they must leave and apply from outside the country, where they may face prolonged separation and significant legal barriers to return.⁴⁴

The natural consequence of all these changes has been a sharp rise in immigration arrests.⁴⁵ However, the effects run much deeper than numbers. Los Angeles-based immigration attorney Laura Urias explained how fear of immigration enforcement has altered life for L.A. residents.

“[E]ven daily sort of tasks, like going to the market, grocery shopping [has become], you know, a scary endeavor.”

- Laura Urias⁴⁶

Laura also explained how despite fear, many have been forced to make the difficult decision of putting their own safety at risk: “[People] would hold off going out looking for work. But at some point, rent came due, and they're like, ‘I can't stay home anymore.’”⁴⁷ The devastating consequences this has had on family units in Los Angeles was made clear in our conversation with Ana.

⁴² Termination of Parole Processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans, 90 Fed. Reg. 13611, 13611-12 (Mar. 25, 2025).

⁴³ Department of State (@StateDept), TWITTER (Jan. 12, 2026), <https://x.com/StateDept/status/2010740549469557010>.

⁴⁴ U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGR. SERVS., *Adjustment of Status is a Matter of Discretion and Administrative Grace, and an Extraordinary Relief that Permits Applicants to Dispense with the Ordinary Consular Visa Process*, Policy Memorandum 602-0199 (May 21, 2026), <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/memos/PM-602-0199-AdjustmentOfStatusAndDiscretion-20260521.pdf>.

⁴⁵ See DEPORTATION DATA PROJECT, *supra* note 6.

⁴⁶ Interview with Laura Urias, attorney with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) (Mar. 9, 2026).

⁴⁷ *Id.*

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“At first [my dad] stopped going to work, but then he started, you know, realizing that this, this might not change for a while, and he can't just keep putting his work aside...because in his mind...Who's going to pay your bills? And he's the sole provider of our family. [So], every day that my father goes to work, I really hope he comes back.”

- Ana⁴⁸

Our interview with Nina Rabin, a UCLA Law professor who directs the Immigrant Family Legal Clinic at Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools, reveals how the increased arrests have curtailed students' access to K-12 education in L.A. public schools.

“[E]nrollment is significantly down this year, and I think that's...partly because of fear that people are not coming to school.”

- Prof. Nina Rabin⁴⁹

Beyond upending the personal lives of residents, fear has also plunged Los Angeles into economic uncertainty. A recent report by the County of Los Angeles showed that of the immigrant population, undocumented workers alone contribute 17% of Los Angeles County's GDP.⁵⁰ The same study revealed that due to increased immigration enforcement, 59% of employers are concerned about maintaining their workforce, and 33% of these employers stated that workers were afraid to report for work.⁵¹

Unsurprisingly, arrest rates in L.A. have and continue to disproportionately impact working-age residents.⁵² The fear incited by the increase in arrests has whittled away at a vital workforce population.

This is a reality borne out in our interview with Carlos Amador and another advocate at the Clean Carwash Worker Center in Los Angeles, a grassroots worker organization

⁴⁸ Interview with Ana, 23-year-old Los Angeles resident (Mar. 2, 2026).

⁴⁹ Interview with Nina Rabin, Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Immigrant Family Legal Clinic at UCLA School of Law (Feb. 3, 2026).

⁵⁰ L.A. COUNTY, *New Report from LA County DEO and LAEDC Reveals Widespread Economic Impacts of Federal Immigration Enforcement* (Feb. 9, 2026), <https://lacounty.gov/2026/02/09/new-report-from-la-county-deo-and-laedc-reveals-widespread-economic-impacts-of-federal-immigration-enforcement/>.

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² Approximately 85% of arrests in the Los Angeles region during the first year of the second Trump Administration were of adults aged 18-54. This analysis is based on ICE data on “Administrative arrests” obtained through the Deportation Data Project. DEPORTATION DATA PROJECT, *Administrative Arrests*, <https://ice-arrests.apps.deportationdata.org/>.

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serving approximately 10,000 car wash workers across the county.⁵³ They explained that “some workers [have] made the decision to leave the country...because of the raids.”⁵⁴

By putting more people—including those with lawful status, students, and workers—in the crosshairs of an extravagantly funded and aggressive immigration enforcement system, the Administration’s policies have upended the daily lives of Los Angeles’ families, schools, and businesses.

Detention as a Cornerstone of Enforcement

As more people are forced into the immigration system, detention has become an increasingly central part of immigration enforcement. This expansion reflects not only increased enforcement activity, but policy choices that broaden who is detained and restrict opportunities for release. Together, these changes have made detention a key component of the Trump Administration’s immigration agenda in Los Angeles and throughout the United States.

Expanding Mandatory Detention

“Mandatory detention” refers to federal statutes that require some noncitizens to be detained while their cases are pending in immigration courts. One way the Trump Administration has expanded the reach of mandatory detention is by more broadly classifying individuals as “arriving” in the United States.⁵⁵ This phrase is part of the federal statute that defines who must be detained.

By applying this broader interpretation, more people arrested by immigration authorities—including those who entered the United States without inspection months or years ago—are now subject to mandatory detention. This keeps them locked up

⁵³ See CLEAN Carwash Worker Center, Overview, <https://www.cleancarwash.org/#overview>.

⁵⁴ Interview with Carlos Amador, advocate at CLEAN Carwash Worker Center (Mar. 16, 2026).

⁵⁵ The Administration formally adopted this broad interpretation of “arriving” in a precedential decision issued by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) in September 2025: *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and its implementing regulations, distinguishes between individuals classified as “arriving [noncitizens]”—defined, in part, as an “applicant for admission coming or attempting to come” to the United States—and subjects them to a different detention framework than individuals arrested within the country after entering without inspection. In most cases, the “arriving” classification places individuals into mandatory detention, meaning they are held in custody without the ability to seek release in a bond hearing before an immigration judge. See AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, *Practice Advisory: Detention Under INA § 235 (b): The Statutory Scheme and Strategies for Release* (Sept. 2025), p. 14, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Practice_Advisory_Detention_Under_INA235.pdf.

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during their immigration proceedings and typically prevents them from seeking release through a bond hearing before an immigration judge.⁵⁶

Recent legislative changes, including the 2025 Laken Riley Act, further broadened mandatory detention by extending it to some individuals based solely on mere arrest or charges, even without a conviction.⁵⁷ This means that people with certain convictions (including relatively minor or old offenses) and people solely arrested and charged (but never convicted) of certain crimes—are required to remain in custody during their immigration proceedings.⁵⁸

These shifts have made release from detention increasingly inaccessible—and, for many individuals, impossible. More people are categorically denied the opportunity to seek release through a bond hearing. Even when detention is not mandatory and bond hearings remain available, release is often denied or conditioned on prohibitively high bond amounts. Recent reporting further suggests that immigration judges have faced increasing pressure from the Administration to deny bond requests.⁵⁹ Detained

⁵⁶ The Administration's broad interpretation of who is "arriving" under INA § 235(b)—and therefore subject to mandatory detention—has been rejected by district courts across the country. See Miriam Jordan & Devlin Barrett, *Federal Courts Undercut Trump's Mass Deportation Campaign*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 1, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/01/us/habeas-corpus-detainee-immigrant-trump-federal-courts.html>. At the time of publication, five Courts of Appeal have weighed in on the issue—two have agreed with the government's interpretation and three have rejected it. *Compare Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, 166 F.4th 494 (5th Cir. 2026) (affirming Trump Administration's view that all noncitizens present in the United States without admission are "arriving" within the meaning of § 235(b)(2)(A) and are therefore subject to mandatory detention); *Avila v. Bondi*, 170 F.4th 1128 (8th Cir. 2026) (same) with *Lopez-Campos v. Raycraft*, 175 F.4th 713 (6th Cir. 2026) (rejecting Trump Administration's new interpretation of the scope of mandatory detention authority under § 235(b)(2)); *Hernandez Alvarez v. Warden*, 175 F.4th 1258 (11th Cir. 2026) (same); *Barbosa da Cunha v. Freden*, 175 F.4th 61 (2d Cir. 2026) (same). The issue is likely to reach the United States Supreme Court. In the meantime, the government in many jurisdictions continues to apply its broad interpretation and hold people arrested in the interior of the United States without access to bond hearings. *But see Sosnava Rodriguez v. Ortega*, Case Nos. 26-50183, 26-50219, 26-50221, 2026 WL 1906557 (5th Cir. July 2, 2026) (holding Due Process Clause requires bond hearings within 90 days for noncitizens subject to mandatory detention under § 235(b)(2)(A)), *sua sponte petition for rehearing granted and panel opinion vacated*, ECF No. 174-1 (5th Cir. July 10, 2026).

⁵⁷ NATIONAL IMMIGRATION PROJECT, *Community Explainer: Laken Riley Act* (Jan. 2025), https://nipnlg.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/2025_NIPNLG-Laken-Riley.pdf.

⁵⁸ See CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC., *What Does the Laken Riley Act Require?* (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.cliniclegal.org/resources/what-does-laken-riley-act-require> (explaining that the Laken Riley Act mandates detention without bail for certain noncitizens arrested or charged with a range of offenses, including lower-level crimes, and applies even where charges are not ultimately sustained).

⁵⁹ See Nicholas Nehamas et al., *How Trump Purged Immigration Judges to Speed Up Deportations*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 9, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/09/us/politics/trump-miller-immigration-judges-purge.html> (reporting that immigration judges were directed not to hold bond hearings for many immigrants and describing "overt" pressure to deny bond requests).

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individuals also face significant barriers to securing counsel and gathering evidence in support of release.

Consequently, individuals placed into detention are far more likely to remain in custody throughout their proceedings, a reality that may also pressure some individuals to abandon claims for relief or accept negative case outcomes rather than remain detained for prolonged periods.

Indeed, during the first year of the second Trump Administration over 6,400 people completed detention stints in Adelanto and Desert View, with an average of over 50 days in detention—separated from family, jobs, and community.⁶⁰ Perhaps it should come as no surprise that rather than face months of separation with no chance of release on bond, noncitizen Angelenos—and people in similar situations across the country—are under tremendous pressure to leave the U.S. rather than remain and pursue what relief the law may provide.

Rising Detention, Worsening Conditions

The rapid expansion of detention under the second Trump Administration has transformed not only the scale of detention, but also the conditions of confinement and the role detention plays in shaping people's experiences within the immigration system.

Nationwide, both the number of people detained and the infrastructure used to confine them have increased sharply. Before the completion of the first year of the second Trump Administration, the number of people held in immigration detention had increased by nearly 70 percent.⁶¹ By November 2025, ICE was holding noncitizens in 104

⁶⁰ This analysis is based on ICE data on “Detention facility stints” obtained through the Deportation Data Project. The “Detention facility stints” table “[r]ecords each detention from book-in to book-out at a given detention facility for a given individual.” DEPORTATION DATA PROJECT, *Detention Facility Stints*, <https://ice-detention-stints.apps.deportationdata.org/>. This means that the unit of analysis is the entry into the facility rather than the individual. For this analysis, we organized the data to ensure individuals with multiple stints in Adelanto and Desert View during the relevant time period were counted only once.

⁶¹ Sources vary slightly regarding the number of individuals held in ICE detention at the start of the second Trump Administration, with estimates placing the number at approximately 39,000–40,000 people. Compare Montoya-Galvez, *supra* note 5 (reporting that ICE held “around 39,000 individuals” in January 2025) with AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, *supra* note 10 at 2 (reporting that “roughly 40,000 people” were held in immigration detention when President Trump took office).

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more detention facilities than at the start of the year—a 91% increase—ranging from small county jails to large-scale sites capable of holding thousands of people.⁶²

California has not been immune from this growth. In March 2025, a new privately-run detention facility, the California City Detention Center, opened with a bed capacity of 2,560.⁶³ In April 2026, ICE also began to transfer detainees to the Central Valley Annex, a former state prison with a 700-bed capacity.⁶⁴

At the same time, the Administration's expansion of detention has changed who is being detained and how detention capacity is used. As border apprehensions declined, existing detention beds were increasingly reallocated toward people arrested within the United States rather than at the border. The number of daily detention beds used for individuals apprehended within the United States quadrupled—from approximately 14,000 in late 2024 to roughly 57,000 by early 2026.⁶⁵

Broadening detention in this way has also expanded the scope of who is subject to confinement. Nationally, the population of people with no criminal record held in ICE detention on any given day rose by 2,450% between January 2025 and November 2025.⁶⁶

As detention has expanded, conditions in immigration prisons have deteriorated. Facilities absorbing larger populations face overcrowding, limited resources, and inadequate infrastructure, resulting in environments where basic needs often go unmet. Omar recounted that, during his detention, people were left without clean drinking water for two days, forcing him to heat toilet water in a microwave in an attempt to make it safe to drink.⁶⁷ Conditions were further exacerbated by extreme temperatures, minimal bedding, and limited access to medical care.⁶⁸ In one instance, Omar observed a detained person with a leg injury receive no medical treatment and be told to walk despite being unable to do so.⁶⁹

⁶² AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, *supra* note 10 at 24-25 (analyzing recent expansion of immigration detention and related conditions).

⁶³ CAL. DEPT. OF JUSTICE, *supra* note 9 at 4, 13.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 5.

⁶⁵ Blair & Hausman, *supra* note 4.

⁶⁶ AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL, *supra* note 10 at 5.

⁶⁷ Interview with Omar, 19-year-old Los Angeles resident (Mar. 20, 2026).

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Id.*

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These conditions are not isolated. They reflect the strain placed on detention facilities as the system expands. Omar also described being held in a room with approximately 80 other people: "It was 80 people packed into one room, and we had to share one microwave."⁷⁰ In such conditions, even minor issues became sources of conflict. "Everybody's stressed about their case...People argue over everything...the microwave...the mattresses...the TV channels."⁷¹

Alarming, the dramatic increases in ICE detention came with deaths in detention reaching their highest levels in decades in 2025. At least 33 people died in custody—triple the number reported in 2024.⁷² Early data suggests that 2026 may surpass that total.⁷³ Facilities in California have been among the deadliest in the country, with the Adelanto ICE Processing Center alone reporting four deaths between late 2025 and early 2026.⁷⁴

The troubling effects of expanded detention are not just physical. They can also be psychologically devastating. As Omar explained, "I was genuinely so confused...I thought this was like a big misunderstanding."⁷⁵ Reflecting on one of her client's experiences in detention, Professor Nina Rabin similarly observed that "the minute all of this happened to him...he's never going to be the same...it just changes the way they feel about the society that they live in, in a way that's hard to repair."⁷⁶

⁷⁰ *Id.*

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² Laura Strickler, *ICE Releases Delayed Detainee Death Reports as 2026 Total Rises to 17*, NBC NEWS (Apr. 18, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/ice-report-deaths-detainees-rcna340802> (reporting that ICE documented 33 detainee deaths in 2025—the highest total in more than two decades—compared to 11 deaths in 2024).

⁷³ *Id.*; see also Haddy Gassama, *Deaths in Detention: ICE Is Rapidly Expanding Detention Camps into Warehouses Despite Record Deaths*, ACLU (Apr. 28, 2026), <https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/deaths-in-detention-ice-is-rapidly-expanding-detention-camps-into-warehouses-despite-record-deaths> (arguing that rapid expansion of immigration detention has contributed to overcrowding, deteriorating conditions, preventable deaths, and pressure on detained individuals to abandon legal claims).

⁷⁴ Sergio Martínez-Beltrán et al., *Deaths of Migrants in ICE Custody Hit Record High Under Trump. California and Texas Top List*, LAIST (Apr. 18, 2026), <https://laist.com/news/deaths-of-migrants-in-ice-custody-hit-record-high-under-trump-california-and-texas-top-list> (reporting that the Adelanto ICE Processing Center was among the deadliest immigration detention facilities in the country during fiscal year 2026); Brittny Mejia & Ruben Vives, *As Fourth Man Dies at Adelanto ICE Detention Center, Mexican Officials Call for Investigation*, L.A. TIMES (Mar. 30, 2026), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2026-03-30/as-fourth-man-dies-at-adelanto-ice-detention-center-mexican-officials-call-for-investigation>.

⁷⁵ Interview with Omar, 19-year-old Los Angeles resident (Mar. 20, 2026).

⁷⁶ Interview with Nina Rabin, Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Immigrant Family Legal Clinic at UCLA School of Law (Feb. 3, 2026).

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At the same time, detention increasingly shapes whether people are able to pursue the relief that federal law provides for people in their circumstances. Individuals in detention face limited access to legal representation, restricted communication with family, and prolonged confinement that can erode hope and pressure people to abandon claims for relief or to accept removal. Many are transferred far from their communities, disrupting access to counsel and support networks.⁷⁷

As attorney Laura Urias explained, individuals in detention may “lose hope” and choose to leave the country rather than face what feels like an inevitable outcome.⁷⁸ This may occur through formal mechanisms such as voluntary departure granted during immigration proceedings, as well as through decisions outside the formal adjudication process to self-deport and abandon claims for relief. Together, these barriers make it more difficult for people to pursue relief and increase the likelihood that their cases end in removal even when federal law might allow them to stay.

In this way, the rise in detention in the Los Angeles area and across the country is not simply a matter of scale. It reflects a structural shift in which detention operates as a central mechanism of immigration enforcement—one that not only confines individuals, but also skews case outcomes and, ultimately, means deportation.

Reshaping the Immigration Courts

As Los Angeles faces expanded immigration enforcement and detention, noncitizens are also confronting a rapidly transforming immigration court system. The second Trump Administration’s policy changes have subverted the court system by reshaping both who decides cases and how those cases are handled in practice.

As a result, immigration courts in Los Angeles and beyond are shifting from spaces of adjudication to sites of active enforcement. This has made Angelenos and noncitizens around the country increasingly—and understandably—distrustful of the immigration courts’ ability to deliver results that are fair and consistent with the law.

⁷⁷ During the second Trump Administration, ICE increasingly transferred detainees far from their families, attorneys, and support networks, at times to jurisdictions perceived as more favorable to the government. See Gabrielle LaMarr LeMee, *How ICE Detainees Are Moved Miles Away from Families and Attorneys*, L.A. TIMES (Sept. 26, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2025-09-26/faster-more-frequent-transfers-of-immigrant-ice-detainees-sow-fear-and-cut-off-resources>; see also Eric Levenson & Gloria Pazmino, *Why ICE Is Really Moving Detainees Over a Thousand Miles from Where They Were Arrested*, CNN (Apr. 10, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/10/us/immigration-detainees-trump-ice-students-visa>.

⁷⁸ Interview with Laura Urias, attorney with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) (Mar. 9, 2026).

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From Relief to Removal

People applying for visas and other forms of lawful status in the United States are increasingly finding that the federal government is using their efforts to follow the law to funnel them into the immigration court system for deportation. This is the result of a new Trump Administration policy that requires U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the DHS agency responsible for deciding immigration applications (for example, green card applications or visa applications for survivors of violent crime), to place in removal proceedings any person whose application they deny.⁷⁹

This means that what begins as an immigration application is now far more likely to end in removal proceedings—triggered by USCIS issuing a Notice to Appear (NTA), a document that initiates removal proceedings.

This is precisely what happened to one of Laura Urias' clients:

“My client is in her 80s and recently had her TPS revoked. She had a pending work permit that was denied. That triggered a ‘Notice to Appear’ for this woman, who has been here since the 1980s. Unfortunately, she’s really afraid to go back to Honduras.”

- Laura Urias⁸⁰

From February 2025 to June 2025, USCIS issued NTAs and initiated removal proceedings against more than 26,700 noncitizens.⁸¹ By June 2025, USCIS reported issuing approximately 1,840 NTAs per week.⁸² Essentially, the Administration has penalized (and continues to penalize) thousands of noncitizens who try to follow the rules in applying affirmatively for immigration status.

⁷⁹ U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGR. SERVS., *Issuance of Notices to Appear (NTAs) in Cases Involving Inadmissible and Deportable Aliens*, (Feb. 28, 2025), https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-alerts/NTA_Policy_FINAL_2.28.25_FINAL.pdf.

⁸⁰ Interview with Laura Urias, attorney with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) (Mar. 9, 2026).

⁸¹ U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGR. SERVS., *USCIS Initiates Removal Proceedings Against 26,000 Aliens Since February* (June 12, 2025), <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/uscis-initiates-removal-proceedings-against-26000-aliens-since-february>.

⁸² *Id.*

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“Now we really have to explain to people that there is a real risk. You really need to understand that if your [application] gets denied, you will likely end up in court.”

- Laura Urias⁸³

Across Los Angeles, fear is driving noncitizens not to file immigration applications even when they are eligible. This is a chilling trend that reverberates through both private-sector legal practices and non-profit organizations. The threat of NTAs issued by default deters people from applying for affirmative benefits under federal immigration law. More noncitizens are left without lawful status, as any effort to “do it the right way” can quickly turn into a removal order. As a result, more and more people remain vulnerable to the aggressive enforcement tactics discussed above.

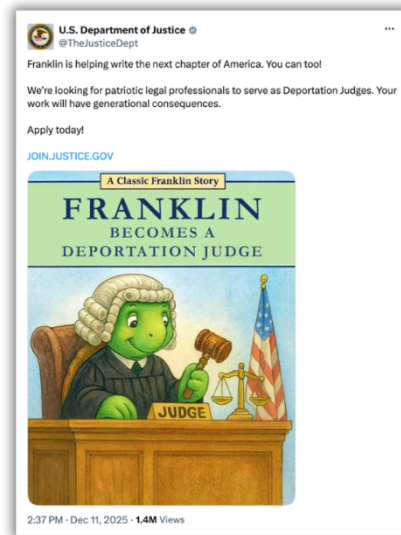
No Fair Day in Court Before a Deportation Judge

As Angelenos continue to be swept into the immigration court system, the Trump Administration's policies have dramatically shifted the role of the courts and immigration judges. Structural changes to immigration courts—including federal pressure to rush to decisions and heightened constraints on immigration judge (IJ) independence—have tied these judges closely to the machinery of mass deportation. The story of immigration enforcement in Los Angeles is not only about raids and detention, but also about how shifts within immigration courts determine whether due process can survive inside an increasingly unfair system.

Given IJs' substantial discretion in deciding removal cases, the second Trump Administration prioritized reshaping the immigration court landscape. The Department of Justice (DOJ) itself has coined the term “deportation judge” in its search for pro-deportation IJs whose priority is to enforce the Administration's agenda.

⁸³ Interview with Laura Urias, attorney with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) (Mar. 9, 2026).

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“ Franklin is helping write the next chapter in America. You can too! We're looking for patriotic legal professionals to serve as Deportation Judges. Your work will have generational consequences. Apply today! JOIN.JUSTICE.GOV ”

Screenshot of DOJ recruitment tweet depicting a children's book character, Franklin the Turtle, as a deportation judge. Source: U.S. DEP'T OF JUST. (@TheJusticeDept) X (formerly Twitter), (last visited July 14, 2026), <https://x.com/TheJusticeDept/status/1999126416642728259?s=20>

To create a new corps of deportation judges, in 2025 the DOJ fired over 100 immigration judges whom it viewed as insufficiently aligned with its deportation agenda.⁸⁴ California alone has lost at least 35 IJs since January 2025.⁸⁵ IJs with immigration defense experience prior to joining the bench appear to be disproportionately targeted by these firings.⁸⁶ And amidst the mass firings of IJs, all remaining IJs face potential disciplinary action if they do not deport more people.⁸⁷

The Administration is replacing fired IJs with judges who appear unqualified to navigate the complexities of immigration law. In 2025, the Trump Administration appointed hundreds of military lawyers—with little to no immigration experience—to serve as

⁸⁴ AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION, *Think Immigration: Our Immigration “Courts” Need a New Boss*, (Oct. 16, 2025), <https://www.aila.org/library/think-immigration-our-immigration-courts-need-a-new-boss>.

⁸⁵ Andrea Castillo, *California has lost more than a quarter of its immigration judges this year*, L.A. TIMES (Dec. 29, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2025-12-29/california-has-lost-more-than-quarter-of-immigration-judges-this-year>.

⁸⁶ Ximena Bustillo & Anusha Mathur, *The DOJ has been firing judges with immigrant defense backgrounds*, NPR, (Nov. 6, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/11/06/g-s1-96437/trump-immigration-judges-fired> (While IJs “who have had only immigration defense experience make up about 26% of the overall judges who remain on the bench,” they were 44% of the IJs fired in 2025. This is more than double the proportion of terminated judges with solely DHS backgrounds.).

⁸⁷ See Nehamas et al., *supra* note 59; Alex Woodward, *Fired judges say Trump team purged courts and threatened disciplinary action if they didn't deport fast enough*, INDEP., (Apr. 9, 2026), <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-deportation-immigration-court-judges-b2954665.html>.

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temporary immigration judges.⁸⁸ Communities, like Los Angeles, pay the price for these temporary hires. For example, in his first two months, a temporary West Los Angeles IJ ordered 77% of the noncitizens who appeared before him to leave the country, either via removal order or “voluntary” departure.⁸⁹

Meanwhile, new permanent hires have extensive pro-deportation backgrounds. As of March 2026, several of the newly-appointed immigration judges had substantial work experience with DHS, ICE, or as prosecutors in the criminal system.⁹⁰ DOJ was offering 25% of base pay as a recruitment incentive for new IJs placed in Los Angeles, as part of an apparent effort to hire more deportation-minded judges in the city.⁹¹

“So much in immigration court is just impossible right now. In many cases, [there’s] just nothing you can do until you get into federal court right now, because the immigration judges are under such scrutiny. There are so many of them that are kind of believers in this assault on the rule of law.”

– Prof. Nina Rabin⁹²

With growing backlogs in immigration cases and taking advantage of a highly politicized corps of IJs, the federal government is placing mounting pressure on IJs to decide cases quickly. In asylum cases, IJs have done this by simply dismissing (or “pretermittin”) a case without holding a full hearing. IJs can deny or dismiss an asylum application if they deem the application incomplete, lacking in detail, or insufficient to establish asylum eligibility.⁹³

Pretermittin can lead to the noncitizen being forcibly returned to a country they are actively fleeing due to persecution or being thrust into a foreign country that might

⁸⁸ Adriel Orozco, *Trump Administration Appoints Hundreds of Unqualified Military Lawyers to Serve as Immigration Judges*, AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/trump-appoints-military-lawyers-to-serve-as-immigration-judges/>.

⁸⁹ Nik Venet, *Trump’s ‘Deportation Judges’ Take Over Has Begun: Half of L.A. Immigrants Now Miss Court and Get Deported Sight Unseen*, L.A. TACO (Mar. 9, 2026), <https://lataco.com/los-angeles-deportation-judges>.

⁹⁰ See U.S. DEP’T OF JUST., *EOIR Announces 42 Immigration Judges*, (Mar. 11, 2026), <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/media/1430876/dl?inline>; see also Nate Raymond, *Trump administration names immigration judges with enforcement backgrounds amid deportation push*, REUTERS (Mar. 12, 2026), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/trump-administration-names-42-immigration-judges-many-enforcement-backgrounds-2026-03-12/>.

⁹¹ See Venet, *supra* note 89.

⁹² Interview with Nina Rabin, Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Immigrant Family Legal Clinic at UCLA School of Law (Feb. 3, 2026).

⁹³ U.S. DEP’T OF JUST., *Pretermittin of Legally Insufficient Applications for Asylum* (Apr. 11, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/media/1396411/dl?inline>.

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ultimately send them back to the country they are fleeing.⁹⁴ In some cases, asylum seekers can be forcibly displaced to third countries via Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs).⁹⁵ These agreements allow the United States to send asylum seekers to a third country (such as Guatemala or Honduras) with which the asylum seeker has no ties and which has no functioning asylum system.⁹⁶

"While I was in court, they were sending people to like third countries. They were asylum-seekers. There was this guy from India, they're trying to send him to Uganda. There was this guy from, you know, Colombia, who had an asylum claim. They were trying to send him to Ecuador."

– Omar⁹⁷

Before the second Trump Administration, pretermission motions were rare, with only 60 motions filed in January 2025.⁹⁸ With new enforcement-minded immigration judges, pretermission soon skyrocketed. By mid-December 2025, DHS attorneys were filing to pretermit over 1,000 cases a day.⁹⁹ In January 2026 alone, DHS filed over 17,000 motions to pretermit in immigration cases.¹⁰⁰ Attorneys report that at least 272 pretermission motions were filed in Los Angeles-area immigration courts in the first 18 months of this Administration.¹⁰¹

"[Community members] understand the reality of winning an asylum claim was less than 1%."

– Laura Urias¹⁰²

Even if an IJ does not pretermit a case, the case may never be fully heard if the noncitizen is unable to appear. As community trust in the legal process erodes, more

⁹⁴ *Id.*

⁹⁵ See *Matter of C-I-G-M- & L-V-S-G-*, 29 I&N Dec. 291 (BIA 2025).

⁹⁶ See IMMIGRANT LEGAL RESOURCE CENTER, *Asylum Cooperative Agreements: What You Must Know* (Dec. 2, 2025), <https://www.ilrc.org/community-resources/asylum-cooperative-agreements-what-you-must-know>.

⁹⁷ Interview with Omar, 19-year-old Los Angeles resident (Mar. 20, 2026).

⁹⁸ CENTER FOR GENDER AND REFUGEE STUDIES, *Motions to Pretermit in Immigration Court: Updates and Resources from CGRS*, <https://cgrs.uclawsf.edu/en/pretermission> (last visited May 29, 2026).

⁹⁹ Joseph Gunther & Brandon Marrow, *No Hearing Necessary: Updated Report on Pretermission and Third-Country Deportations in Immigration Court*, BKLK, (Jan. 12, 2026), <https://bklg.org/blog/pretermission-01-26/#fnref:2>.

¹⁰⁰ *Supra* note 98.

¹⁰¹ See CENTER FOR GENDER AND REFUGEE STUDIES, *Pretermission Trend Dashboard*, https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/1a8a195c-601c-4e51-a4ab-2efba6693a7e/page/p_3lhkfrvzzd (searching by Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and Adelanto Immigration Courts) (last visited June 11, 2026).

¹⁰² Interview with Laura Urias, attorney with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) (Mar. 9, 2026).

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noncitizens are missing hearings. The result is that more people are being ordered removed simply for failure to appear in court, even when the reason is their fear that they will be arrested for simply showing up.¹⁰³

During a hearing at the North Los Angeles Street Immigration Court, UCLA Law students observed that 17 noncitizens did not appear for their proceedings.¹⁰⁴ None of these individuals had a lawyer, and six of them were ordered removed in-absentia—turning an unfair day in court into no day in court at all.¹⁰⁵

The second Trump Administration has rounded out its attacks on immigration courts by reshaping appellate review. The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) is the appellate body within DOJ that is responsible for reviewing IJs' decisions. The Administration has slashed the number of judges who sit on the BIA and stacked the remaining positions with Trump's appointees, who have decided 97% of their 2025 cases in favor of DHS.¹⁰⁶

In sum, more and more people—including many Angelenos—are facing removal proceedings in immigration courts that act as sites of expanded enforcement rather than due process. The Trump Administration's policies actively encourage IJs to decide cases quickly, strip noncitizens of their day in court, and deport as many people as possible, even when the fair application of federal law might lead to a different outcome.

Interlocking Policy Changes, Interrelated Effects

As this section shows, the first year of the Trump Administration's policy changes have combined to pave the way for more arrests, greater reliance on detention, and limits on access to due process. In short, these policies conspire to deliver on an anti-

¹⁰³ Ximena Bustillo & Rahul Mukherjee, *NPR analysis shows skyrocketing number of 'no-shows' in immigration court*, NPR (Dec. 22, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/12/22/nx-s1-5583971/trump-ice-immigration-arrests-deportation-no-shows>.

¹⁰⁴ UCLA Law students in the Immigrant Family Legal Clinic conducted court observations on March 31, 2026, at the North Los Angeles St. Immigration Court.

¹⁰⁵ *Id.*

¹⁰⁶ Ximena Bustillo & Rahul Mukherjee, *An immigration court few have heard of is quietly shaping policy behind the scenes*, NPR (Mar. 20, 2026), <https://www.npr.org/2026/03/20/nx-s1-5707535/trump-immigration-detention-appeals-board-deportation>. Among other efforts to reduce BIA review, the Administration also attempted to slash noncitizens' deadline to file for appeals from 30 days to just 10 days (including weekends and holidays); litigation has thus far prevented this change from taking effect. See *Amica Ctr. for Immigrant Rights v. Exec. Off. for Immigr. Rev.*, Case No. 1:26-cv-00696, ECF No. 32 (D.D.C. Mar. 8, 2026), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/32-Amica-v.-EOIR-Memorandum-and-Decision-Granting-Partial-SJ-03.08.2026.pdf>.

immigration agenda that pulls as many people as possible into a punitive and unfair immigration system that the Administration has subverted to reach skewed results.

How Has Los Angeles Responded?

Los Angeles is not only an important site for understanding how the second Trump Administration's aggressive immigration policies have played out on the ground—but also for how they can be challenged. In highlighting Los Angeles's resilience, this section hopes to push Angelenos to continue strengthening support and to inspire other localities to do the same.

Community Mobilization Efforts: Not on Our watch!

“[C]ontinue to resist.”

- Carlos Amador¹⁰⁷

To combat escalating immigration enforcement, communities, advocates, and organizations across Los Angeles have developed rapid response networks, court observation projects, and coordinated legal advocacy efforts. These efforts have played a crucial role in documenting enforcement activity, supporting impacted families, and creating the factual record necessary to challenge enforcement practices in court.

According to attorney Laura Urias, legal challenges to immigration enforcement practices were possible because rapid responders, community volunteers, and organizers were willing to document and verify what was happening on the ground.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Carlos Amador, advocate at CLEAN Carwash Worker Center (Mar. 16, 2026).

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Laura Urias, attorney with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) (Mar. 9, 2026).

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A mural with the phrase "Solo el pueblo salva el pueblo" ("Only the people can save the people") on Savannah Street in Boyle Heights. (Steve Saldivar / The LA Local, published June 6, 2026)

Coordinated rapid response networks across Los Angeles play an important role in monitoring immigration enforcement activity and supporting impacted communities in real time. Since June 2025, L.A.'s Rapid Response Hotline, operated by the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), has answered calls from thousands of community members, attempting to document immigration enforcement sightings and connect families to legal services.

As Carlos Amador from CLEAN Carwash explained, community organizations and volunteers share real-time alerts, document enforcement activity, help identify detained individuals, locate family members, and connect people to legal and financial support.¹⁰⁹ In one instance, organizers with CLEAN Carwash were able to identify a detained carwash worker through videos circulated on social media, illustrating how community-generated documentation can play a crucial role in post-raid response efforts.¹¹⁰ As Carlos emphasized, these coordinated efforts are essential not only in responding to immediate harm, but also in strengthening long-term community capacity to respond to ongoing enforcement.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Carlos Amador, advocate at CLEAN Carwash Worker Center (Mar. 16, 2026).

¹¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹¹ *Id.*

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Community members also conduct court observations to promote accountability and transparency in immigration courts. Organizations such as Court Watch LA and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) organize volunteers to observe both detained and non-detained court proceedings.¹¹² Beyond signaling public concern about fairness in immigration proceedings, court observations help document broader trends, including judges' conduct and courtroom practices. Networks like CLUE also organize court accompaniment programs through which volunteers help individuals navigate courtroom procedures and provide emotional support throughout the process.

Legal Challenges: Taking the Fight to Federal Court

In turn, these organizing and documentation efforts have supported broader legal challenges to immigration enforcement practices. Perhaps most significantly, Los Angeles became the site of the first major legal challenge to ICE's expanded use of racial and economic profiling by "roving patrols" that began in summer 2025.¹¹³

The case, *Vasquez Perdomo*, was brought through a collaboration of five individuals and four community organizations, represented by co-counsel from multiple legal services organizations.¹¹⁴ These individuals and organizations were later joined by the City and County of Los Angeles, along with seven additional L.A.-area cities, who intervened in the lawsuit to protect their own interests and the interests of their residents against unconstitutional immigration enforcement.¹¹⁵

¹¹² See COURT WATCH LA, *Court Watch?*, <https://courtwatchla.org/#:~:text=Court%20Watch> (describing its court observation program, which trains volunteers to observe judicial behavior, collect data, and promote accountability and transparency in court proceedings); CLERGY AND LAITY UNITED FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE (CLUE), *We stand with Immigrant Families*, <https://www.cluejustice.org/working-for-justice/justice-for-immigrant-workers-and-families/> (describing its immigrant justice advocacy, accompaniment, and rapid response efforts).

¹¹³ See Complaint, *Vasquez Perdomo v. Noem*, Case No. 2:25-cv-05605, ECF No. 16 (C.D. Cal. filed July 2, 2025), <https://www.aclusocal.org/cases/vasquez-perdomo-v-noem/?document=Plaintiffs-file-complaint-against-DHS#documents>.

¹¹⁴ *Id.*

¹¹⁵ See *Vasquez Perdomo v. Noem*, Case No. 2:25-cv-05605, ECF No. 63 (C.D. Cal. filed July 8, 2025), <https://publiccounsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/63-Intervenors-Unopposed-Ex-Parte-Application-to-Participate.pdf>; see also Matthew Rodriguez, *L.A. County cities join federal civil rights lawsuit over immigration operations*, CBS NEWS (July 8, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/la-county-federal-civil-rights-lawsuit-ice-immigration/>; *Vasquez Perdomo*, Case No. 2:25-cv-05605, ECF No. 129 (C.D. Cal. July 29, 2025), <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.cacd.975351/gov.uscourts.cacd.975351.129.0.pdf> (order granting motion to intervene).

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Though an initial temporary restraining order issued by a federal district court judge was stayed by the U.S. Supreme Court, the litigation is proceeding. Ongoing discovery in this lawsuit is poised to uncover the tactics that immigration agents continue to use in Los Angeles and beyond.¹¹⁶

Other lawsuits have challenged detention practices and conditions in the region. In *Maldonado Bautista v. DHS*, detained individuals in the Los Angeles area challenged the federal government's expanded use of mandatory detention and denial of bond hearings.¹¹⁷ In *L.T. v. ICE*, people detained in Adelanto challenged conditions of confinement, including inadequate medical care, unsanitary conditions, and limited access to basic necessities.¹¹⁸

Taken together, these efforts reflect a broader pattern of community resistance to the expansion of immigration enforcement in Los Angeles. Rapid response networks, court observation projects, and legal advocacy efforts not only respond to immediate harms, but also help build collective systems of accountability, documentation, and support for communities navigating an increasingly punitive immigration system.

Policymaking to Protect Angelenos

California and Los Angeles have also played an important role in responding to the expansion of immigration enforcement in the region by exercising their authority under the U.S. Constitution to enact state and local laws. In 2017, the state legislature enacted the California Values Act (SB 54) to ensure public safety and protect the rights of immigrant communities by restricting the use of local and state law enforcement resources for cooperation with federal immigration officials.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ See *Noem v. Vasquez Perdomo*, 146 S.Ct. 1 (2025); see also *Vasquez Perdomo v. Noem*, Case No. 2:25-cv-05605, ECF No. 484 at 1 (C.D. Cal. Apr. 7, 2026) (granting leave to file second amended complaint where Plaintiffs “have informed the Court that they now have statements under oath from ICE agents and officials stating that it was their official policy to intentionally target people because they were Latino and to use very aggressive tactics in detaining people”).

¹¹⁷ See Complaint, *Maldonado Bautista v. DHS*, Case No. 5:25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM, ECF No. 15 (C.D. Cal. filed July 28, 2025), <https://www.aclu.org/cases/maldonadobautista-v-dhs?document=Complaint#legal-documents>. See also *supra* note 56.

¹¹⁸ See *L.T. v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, Case No. 5:26-cv-00322, ECF No. 1 (C.D. Cal. filed Jan. 26, 2026), <https://publiccounsel.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2026-01-26-1-Complaint-Class-Action-L.T.-v.-ICE.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ CAL. GOV. CODE § 7284.2.

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In the wake of the 2024 presidential election, the City of Los Angeles passed its own robust ordinance prohibiting the use of city resources for federal immigration enforcement.¹²⁰ Building on SB 54, this Los Angeles ordinance restricts access to non-public areas of city property for the purpose of immigration enforcement absent a judicial warrant, places restrictions on responding to administrative warrants and detainer requests, and protects against the sharing of certain sensitive data by city personnel and contractors.¹²¹ Other local jurisdictions in the L.A. region soon followed suit in adopting protective policies.¹²²

As ICE's aggressive tactics expanded, the city further strengthened its commitment by requiring identification and signage to be placed on city property to prevent its use for immigration enforcement purposes and by instructing the Los Angeles Police Department to preserve evidence relating to federal conduct in immigration enforcement incidents that may give rise to state criminal prosecutions.¹²³

Los Angeles County has likewise enacted protective policies, including one that restricts the use of County property for civil immigration enforcement and another that addresses the increased presence of immigration agents in public hospitals.¹²⁴

Similarly, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has taken proactive steps to ensure that students are safe. At the beginning of the 2025-26 school year, the LAUSD Superintendent announced that schools would provide virtual attendance options,

¹²⁰ City of L.A., Cal., Ordinance 188441 (2024), available at https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2023/23-0243_ord_%20188441_12-19-24.pdf.

¹²¹ *Id.* at §§ 19.191(c), 19.191(d), 19.192.

¹²² See, e.g., City of Lynwood, Cal., Lynwood Values Act (Mar. 3, 2026), available at https://www.lynwoodca.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_03032026-390; City of Huntington Park, Cal., Sanctuary Policy (July 8, 2025), available at <https://ecode360.com/47696423>; see also Samantha Raquel Norrs, *San Fernando City Council Unanimously Passes Resolution to Protect Immigrants*, SAN FERNANDO VALLEY SUN (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://sanfernandosun.com/2025/04/23/san-fernando-city-council-unanimously-passes-resolution-to-protect-immigrants/>; Gavin J. Quinton, *City Council Passes 'Sanctuary' Immigration Policy*, BURBANK LEADER (Feb. 16, 2025), https://outlooknewspapers.com/burbankleader/news/city-council-passes-sanctuary-immigration-policy/article_898bafce-ea59-11ef-8254-474448ffa97e.html.

¹²³ L.A. Mayor, Exec. Dir. No. 17, "Protecting Angelenos from Ongoing Dangerous Federal Immigration Operations" (Feb. 10, 2026), <https://mayor.lacity.gov/sites/g/files/wph2066/files/2026-02/Executive%20Directive%20No.%2017%20-%20Protecting%20Angelenos%20from%20Ongoing%20Dangerous%20Federal%20Immigration.pdf>.

¹²⁴ See L.A. County, Cal., Preserving County Real and Personal Property for County Purposes (Feb. 13, 2026), available at <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/213196.pdf>; L.A. County Dep't of Health Services, Policy No. 8337, "Interactions with Civil Law Enforcement Agencies and Protocol for Patients in Civil Detention" (Mar. 19, 2026), adopted by Motion of L.A. County Board of Supervisors on May 12, 2026, <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/216476.pdf>; see also

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disseminate Know Your Rights (KYR) information, have teachers patrol school grounds, and prohibit immigration enforcement agents from entering the school without a judicial warrant.¹²⁵ At Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools, school staff surround the perimeter of the closed campus, KYR resources are provided, and family-safety planning services are available.¹²⁶

In higher education, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) has set up its BruinAlert system to notify students of ICE presence on campus, in accordance with the Safe Act (SB 98)—a state law that requires schools and universities to notify students, staff, and families when immigration enforcement is confirmed to be happening on campus.¹²⁷ This policy response is complemented by UCLA students themselves playing an essential role in creating safer schools by mobilizing to protest against ICE activity.¹²⁸

While local policymaking cannot prevent federal immigration authorities from operating in Los Angeles altogether, it plays a key role in curbing abuses, preserving local resources, countering federal overreach with a strong local government response, and assuring members of local communities that they belong.

Expanding Services: Legal Support, Mutual Aid, and More

As more individuals in Los Angeles become subject to immigration enforcement, local legal service organizations strive to offer counsel to as many people as possible. Attorney Laura Urias explained one strategy used by local legal organizations to increase the provision of legal assistance: to more efficiently connect people to attorneys by sharing information about individuals seeking help across the local non-profit network.¹²⁹ Laura also explained how her organization has shifted towards routinely assessing individuals' immigration history and family circumstances to better

¹²⁵ Tracey Leong et al., *LAUSD superintendent calls for limits on immigration enforcement activity near schools*, NBC4 LOS ANGELES (Aug. 14, 2025) <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/laUSD-promises-students-safety-from-immigration-raids/3764157/>.

¹²⁶ Interview with Nina Rabin, Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Immigrant Family Legal Clinic at UCLA School of Law (Feb. 3, 2026).

¹²⁷ Phoebe Huss, *UC agrees to send alerts on campus immigration enforcement activity*, DAILY BRUIN (Feb. 18, 2026), <https://dailybruin.com/2026/02/18/uc-agrees-to-send-alerts-on-campus-immigration-enforcement-activity>.

¹²⁸ Delilah Brumer & Maggie Konecky, *Hundreds demonstrate on campus as part of nationwide protest against ICE activity*, DAILY BRUIN (Feb. 1, 2026), <https://dailybruin.com/2026/01/30/hundreds-demonstrate-on-campus-as-part-of-nationwide-protest-against-ice-activity>.

¹²⁹ Interview with Laura Urias, attorney with Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) (Mar. 9, 2026).

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understand their level of risk for deportation and for detention while their cases are being decided.¹³⁰

Recognizing the importance of legal representation amid constrained capacity, the City and County of Los Angeles, alongside philanthropic partners, created RepresentLA—a legal defense initiative for low-income L.A. residents. The program offers detained and non-detained deportation defense, affirmative immigration relief support, and social support services.¹³¹ Notably, RepresentLA operates on a universal representation model, meaning eligible individuals can access the program regardless of the perceived strength of their case or any prior criminal history.¹³² Since its launch in April 2022, RepresentLA has served “more than 21,000 people, providing free legal representation, legal orientation, and connections to essential resources for some of the most vulnerable, including asylum seekers, survivors of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, Veterans, and immigrants experiencing homelessness.”¹³³

Yet even in Los Angeles, home to an extensive immigrant rights infrastructure and large network of nonprofit legal providers, Carlos reports that it remains difficult to find nonprofit organizations with the capacity to take on deportation defense cases.¹³⁴ In response to these gaps in local resources and capacity, state-level initiatives for universal representation are gaining traction.

For example, AB 2600, a bill proposed during the 2025-26 California legislative session, would have established a state-level right to counsel in deportation proceedings.

An accompanying budget proposal would add funding for state-wide removal defense efforts.¹³⁵ Although AB 2600 did not pass, the state’s approved budget for 2026-27 includes a one-time increase of \$100 million for immigration legal services, marking a

¹³⁰ *Id.*

¹³¹ L.A. CNTY. OFF. OF IMMIGR. AFFS., OIA, *CHIRLA Expand Program to Link Immigrants and Families to Legal Representation, Support Services*, (June 9, 2022), <https://oia.lacounty.gov/representla-launch/>.

¹³² L.A. CNTY. DEP’T OF CONSUMER & BUS. AFFS., *Status Report on the RepresentLA Program*, (Nov. 7, 2024), https://www.dcba.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2024-11-07-Status-Report-on-RepresentLA-Program_rc.pdf.

¹³³ L.A. CNTY. DEP’T OF CONSUMER & BUS. AFFS., *Report on Sustaining and Expanding RepresentLA*, (Aug. 13, 2025), https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/1190095_2025-08-13ReportonSustainingandExpandingRepresentLA_rc.pdf.

¹³⁴ Interview with Carlos Amador, advocate at CLEAN Carwash Worker Center (Mar. 16, 2026).

¹³⁵ A.B. 2600, 2025-2026 Reg. Sess. (Cal. 2026), available at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB2600.

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growing recognition that expanded enforcement requires greater access to legal representation.¹³⁶

While state initiatives continue to progress, community organizations aim to address existing gaps beyond legal needs. Some organizations have expanded their services to support individuals in both legal matters and day-to-day living. For example, our interview with advocates at CLEAN Carwash revealed that though the organization has traditionally focused on labor rights and policy advocacy, it has now entered a new arena of services in response to increased immigration enforcement: deportation defense.¹³⁷ CLEAN has also built on its existing services by providing mutual aid through fundraisers and food distributions.¹³⁸



Hundreds of students gather in downtown LA as they march from City Hall toward the Metropolitan Detention Center on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2026. (Laura Anaya-Morga / Boyle Heights Beat)

Together, all of these efforts are essential not only in meeting immediate needs but also in ensuring that individuals affected by enforcement are not left to navigate life-

¹³⁶ See Masih Fouladi, *California Budget Delays Worst Medi-Cal Cuts for Immigrants — But Gaps Remain and the Fight Continues*, CALIFORNIA IMMIGRANT POLICY CENTER (June 30, 2026), <https://caimmigrant.org/with-budget-deadline-days-away-legislators-and-advocates-demand-california-protect-immigrant-health-coverage-food-security-and-legal-services/> (“On immigration legal services, California delivered a historic win. The signed budget adds \$100 million for immigration legal services, bringing the state’s total investment to \$175 million, the largest state commitment in the country.”).

¹³⁷ Interview with Carlos Amador and another advocate at CLEAN Carwash Worker Center (Mar. 16, 2026).

¹³⁸ *Id.*

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altering consequences alone. As Professor Rabin emphasized, fostering connection and community is essential during this time of heightened enforcement.¹³⁹

“Support at the local level is so important, so people don't just feel completely isolated in their home. I do think that there's even more of a need for that than there ever has been, for not just getting somebody an attorney but trying to find ways for people to feel connected and in community. Because it's otherwise such a just isolating situation for people.”

Prof. Nina Rabin¹⁴⁰

In this way, Los Angeles's response reflects not only an expansion of legal and material support, but a broader commitment to collective care—demonstrating how communities can mobilize to mitigate the human impact of violent enforcement that runs roughshod over due process.

Conclusion

What is happening in Los Angeles reflects more than a rise in immigration enforcement: it represents a broader transformation in how immigration law can be weaponized to create a climate of fear and dehumanization whose impacts are felt both within and beyond immigrant communities.

As this paper demonstrates, the second Trump Administration's policies do not operate independently of one another. Expanded enforcement operations, growing reliance on detention, and structural changes to the immigration court system work together to pull more people into the immigration system while simultaneously making it more difficult to secure release, pursue relief provided by federal law, or receive meaningful due process under the U.S. Constitution and federal statutes.

The result is not only an increase in arrests, detention, and deportation, but also the creation of a climate of fear and instability that reaches far beyond those directly targeted by enforcement. Families alter their routines, workers fear leaving their homes, students stop attending school, and communities begin to lose trust in public institutions that are meant to provide protection and fairness. Everyone suffers, noncitizens and citizens alike.

¹³⁹ Interview with Nina Rabin, Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Immigrant Family Legal Clinic at UCLA School of Law (Feb. 3, 2026).

¹⁴⁰ *Id.*

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“A lot of [community members] do not trust that the law will be followed because ICE was already violating so many laws. [The Administration] is just going to do it again.”

- Ana¹⁴¹

At the same time, Los Angeles shows that communities are not accepting these changes passively. Advocates, organizers, legal service providers, elected officials, educators, students, and community members have mobilized to support impacted individuals and resist the expansion of immigration enforcement.

Through rapid response networks, court observation projects, federal court challenges, local policymaking, deportation defense efforts, and mutual aid, Angelenos have created systems of protection and accountability in the face of the Trump Administration's aggressive and often unlawful immigration agenda.

Los Angeles serves as a cautionary tale of how immigration policies can be weaponized in the service of an Administration determined to foment fear and dehumanization in spite of what the law says. But Los Angeles also shows how the protection of immigrant communities can act as a crucial site of resistance for localities equally determined to push back by building solidarity, defending due process, and insisting on the dignity and humanity of all people.



¹⁴¹ Interview with Ana, 23-year-old Los Angeles resident (Mar. 2, 2026).