



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

April 14, 2026

The Honorable Mike Levin
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Levin:

Thank you for your July 17, 2025 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am responding on behalf of the Department.

We appreciate your engagement and the opportunity to set out U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) lawful authorities, officer-safety protocols, and current enforcement posture in the San Diego area of responsibility (AOR). As a matter of policy under President Trump, DHS is restoring predictable, sustained interior enforcement to uphold the rule of law, execute final removal orders, and reduce the pull-factors that incentivize illegal entry.

In an enforcement operation, ICE officers may initially identify themselves as "police" because it is the universally recognized term for law enforcement. Apart from specialized units, ICE law enforcement officers work in plain clothes when engaged in law enforcement operations at large; however, ICE-issued field equipment displays "ICE," "POLICE," or both. Further, ICE officers will generally display badges and wear vests, jackets, or other clothing with markings such as "POLICE" and/or "ICE." Also, pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 287.8(c)(2)(iii), at the time of arrest, an immigration officer shall, as soon as it is practical and safe to do so, identify him/herself as an immigration officer who is authorized to execute an arrest, that the person is under arrest, and the reason for the arrest.

ICE operations in and around sensitive locations are fully within the agency's statutory authority to conduct. Additionally, on January 20, 2025, DHS issued a memorandum entitled, *Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas*,¹ for ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The January 20th memorandum recognizes that "officers frequently apply enforcement discretion to balance a variety of interests, including the degree to which any law enforcement action occurs in a sensitive location. Going forward, law enforcement officers should continue to use that discretion along with a healthy dose of common sense." Between January 20, 2025, and April 1, 2026, ICE conducted 1,454 arrests in or near these locations.

¹ https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2025-03/25_0120_S1_enforcement-actions-in-near-protected-areas.pdf

Regarding your question about individuals detained without judicial warrants, ICE officers are sworn federal law enforcement officers who operate within the confines of the law. Congress, by statute, vested the authority to arrest illegal aliens with a civil immigration arrest warrant under Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 236(a) or to make a warrantless immigration arrest under INA § 287(a)(2) or (a)(4) solely in immigration officials. Under the INA, civil immigration warrants are administrative in nature and are issued by authorized officials within DHS, rather than by a judge. These are routine enforcement actions in compliance with immigration law. Please note, ICE does not provide information on individual arrests without requisite privacy waivers.

When detained, aliens are transported to an ICE detention facility and placed into immigration proceedings or processed for removal if they are subject to a final order of removal. During removal proceedings before an immigration judge, aliens are afforded numerous procedural protections that ensure they are provided notice and an opportunity to be heard. Additionally, while the government does not provide attorneys at government expense, all detainees arrested by ICE and placed into immigration proceedings have access to the ICE Communication Services Free Call Platform, which includes telephone numbers of legal service providers who are listed on the Department of Justice’s Executive Office for Immigration Review list of pro bono legal service providers. Aliens in ICE custody may also communicate for free with their attorneys via video-teleconference at 53 ICE detention facilities. Outside of those free calling options, detained aliens can also pay for calls to communicate with attorneys and family members via www.gettingout.com.

Between January 20, 2025, through April 1, 2026, 10,489 aliens were booked into ICE custody within the ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) San Diego AOR. Please note that ERO does not typically track enforcement actions by district. Additionally, please refer to the chart below for removals originating from the ERO San Diego area of responsibility during the same timeframe. This activity reflects ICE’s renewed focus on executing final orders of removal, addressing public-safety threats, and reducing the absconder population consistent with the law.

**ICE Removals San Diego AOR by Citizenship
January 20, 2025 through April 1, 2026**

Citizenship Country	Totals
Totals	16,368
Afghanistan	24
Albania	1
Algeria	4
Angola	15
Argentina	19
Armenia	44
Australia	5
Azerbaijan	22
Bahamas	2

Bangladesh	18
Belarus	4
Belgium	3
Belize	14
Benin	4
Bolivia	17
Brazil	81
Burkina Faso	2
Cambodia	6
Cameroon	16
Canada	6
Chad	2
Chile	24
China, Peoples Republic of	366
Colombia	429
Congo	5
Costa Rica	3
Cuba	310
Dominica	1
Dominican Republic	40
Ecuador	151
Egypt	11
El Salvador	292
Equatorial Guinea	2
Eritrea	4
Ethiopia	8
Fiji	1
Finland	2
France	2
Georgia	40
Germany	3
Ghana	9
Greece	1
Grenada	1
Guatemala	996
Guinea	2
Guinea-Bissau	1
Haiti	80
Honduras	314

Hong Kong	2
Hungary	1
India	242
Indonesia	5
Iran	17
Iraq	7
Ireland	2
Israel	12
Italy	6
Ivory Coast	1
Jamaica	17
Japan	1
Jordan	26
Kazakhstan	15
Kenya	1
Korea	1
Kosovo	10
Kuwait	2
Kyrgyzstan	28
Laos	33
Latvia	2
Lebanon	1
Libya	1
Mali	13
Mauritania	6
Mexico	10,847
Moldova	2
Mongolia	1
Morocco	15
Mozambique	1
Nepal	38
Netherlands	1
Nicaragua	147
Niger	2
Nigeria	12
Pakistan	17
Panama	7
Peru	92
Philippines	18

Poland	4
Portugal	2
Romania	58
Russia	187
Senegal	11
Sierra Leone	2
Singapore	1
Somalia	20
South Korea	8
South Sudan	1
Spain	15
Sri Lanka	2
St. Kitts-Nevis	1
Sudan	1
Sweden	1
Switzerland	1
Syria	2
Taiwan	2
Tajikistan	2
Thailand	3
Togo	20
Trinidad and Tobago	1
Türkiye	201
Ukraine	17
United Kingdom	11
Unknown	3
Uzbekistan	50
Venezuela	544
Vietnam	133
Yemen	3
Yugoslavia	1
Zimbabwe	1

ICE possesses the unambiguous statutory authority to arrest and remove aliens unlawfully present in the United States, no matter the extent of their criminal histories. Such authority derives from the laws passed by Congress. These laws have stood for decades and been amended and strengthened over the years by bipartisan majorities. ICE enforces immigration law against all removable aliens, and the commission of violent crimes is not a prerequisite for enforcement. Being unlawfully present in the United States is itself a violation of federal law.

Additionally, some aliens have committed crimes in their countries of origin or last country of known residence, but those criminal histories are unknown to U.S. law enforcement. An untold number of other crimes have been committed by illegal aliens in the United States for which they have never been caught or charged. Finally, any crime committed by an illegal alien in the interior was a preventable one—waiting to remove an illegal alien until after the commission of a crime against an American citizen defies common sense and represents an abdication of government's responsibility to protect its citizens.

Thank you again for your letter. Should you still require a briefing, or if you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the ICE Office of Congressional Relations via email at CongressToICE@ice.dhs.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Lyons", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Todd M. Lyons
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

cc: The Honorable Sara Jacobs
The Honorable Scott H. Peters
The Honorable Juan Vargas