



MUN@UWCSEA XIII

CHAIR REPORT

Forum: US Senate

Issue: Addressing deportation policies and the role
of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

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Introduction:

In the global landscape of today, ICE has become a household term due to rising political tensions within the United States. The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), is a United States federal law enforcement agency under the supervision of the US Department of Homeland Security (hereon referred to as the DHS) that handles matters regarding the enforcement of immigration laws, which entail dictating which individuals can enter, stay in, or must leave the United States.

In terms of deportation, ICE's actions include conducting criminal investigations, arresting, detaining, and removing individuals who are in the US unlawfully to "preserve national security and protect public safety". The current law and consequence of being an undocumented immigrant in the States currently is detention and eventually deportation by ICE. For those who haven't been caught by ICE yet, there is always the imminent risk of deportation, as well as the inability to legally maintain employment, a lack of access to healthcare, and often a common experience of racism as well. Despite all of this, undocumented immigrants still pay taxes, contributing about \$11.6 billion a year in taxes, according to the Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy, all while being less likely to use governmental benefits out of the fear of being caught. (Christensen Gee, et al.)

Recently, families have been educating their children about deportation policies and mass deportation practices due to a rise in media coverage of the United States under President Donald Trump's administration. These policies are often those that create and spread harmful effects on immigrant communities, especially through the use of indirect force to perpetuate healthcare avoidance, family separation, and constitutional violations such as overlooking the 14th Amendment dictating birthright citizenship. The Trump administration has been carrying out mass deportations for the past 10 months in his second term, beginning January 2025, with an aim of 1 million "aliens" being deported by the end of 2025 and an indefinite refugee ban.

Even as a global citizen, deportation policies are crucial to be informed about today, as the US is the largest economy and thus these policies have international consequences that affect diplomacy, economics, and influence human rights. The extent to which ICE has dominance goes beyond its physical borders and absolute jurisdiction, as the US' laws do influence external states and their decision-making when it comes to laws and international relations.

Due to this, one may argue that the main tensions here essentially lie between the ideas of sovereignty, security, and human rights. The idea of external

sovereignty seems to be especially contested here, as a sovereign nation is defined as one whose decision-making is not influenced by other states and one that has clear, internationally recognised borders. This alludes to the fact that ICE's role is now more globally significant than ever, as not only is it denying individuals rights within its legal territory, but also influencing significant economic activity abroad. An evident example of external interference is the denial of visas to aspiring tertiary education students and the imposition of a 100,000 USD fee for those seeking H1B work visas. This impacts the external economies that were providing these individuals, as they will have more unemployment when their labour markets experience a spike in job-seekers.

Overall, this report aims to address the roles of ICE in the current political landscape, as well as how deportation policies impact individuals within the US and the greater American region.

Definition of Key Terms:

- 1. Alien:** In the context of US immigration, an alien is a legally defined term for any person who is not a citizen of the United States, as defined by Title 8 of the US Code. Both the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its agencies, such as ICE, use this term. (Office of Homeland Security Statistics, 2025)
- 2. Collective expulsion:** Collective expulsion is the forceful removal of groups of people from the territory of a state, usually without reasonable or objective consideration of each individual's circumstance. It is considered illegal under international law, but the US has been found to violate such requirements on multiple occasions. (European Court of Human Rights, 2024 and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2025)
- 3. Deportation / Removal:** The action of forcing someone to leave a country, especially someone who has no legal right to be there or who has broken the law. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025)
- 4. Expedited Removal:** This is a fast-track deportation process for non-US citizens that enables immigration officers to deny individuals a hearing from an immigration judge. This differs from standard removal proceedings, which involve a formal court hearing. (American Immigration Council, 2025)
- 5. Human rights obligations:** In the context of migration, human rights obligations often entail the provision of due process in immigration proceedings, prohibiting discrimination, and upholding the principle of non-refoulement on top of the basic rights of freedom of speech and religion. (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2025)

- 6. Non-refoulement:** Non-refoulement is the principle that prohibits individuals from being forced to return to their country of origin if there is a real risk of being subjected to violence, persecution, torture, inhumane treatment, or any other human rights violation. (European Commission, 2021)
- 7. Refugee / Asylum seeker:** Refugee or asylum status may be granted to individuals who have been persecuted or have a "well-founded fear of future persecution on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, and/or political opinion". Both are said to be escaping conflict, and the difference can be further understood [here](#). (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2025)
- 8. Sanctuary jurisdictions:** This is a city, county, or state that limits cooperation with federal immigration enforcement (like ICE and DHS). Sanctuary policies state that the federal government cannot compel local jurisdictions to take part in immigration enforcement, as it may be considered likely unconstitutional. (American Immigration Council, 2025)
- 9. Third-country deportation:** During deportation processes, judges must designate a country where migrants must move to, usually one of their origin. If this is "impracticable, inadvisable, or impossible," the Immigration and Nationality Act authorises the DHS to remove a noncitizen to a third country, which may or may not be one where they hold citizenship or nationality. (Metzler, 2025)

Background Information:

Origins of ICE

ICE was formed in March of 2003 as an agency of the DHS after the passage of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. This occurred due to government restructuring mandates as a public safety prioritisation response to the 2001 September 11 terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda. The DHS, and, as a result, ICE were the product of a merger of the investigative and interior enforcement sectors of the former US Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS). (ICE, 2020 and EBSCO, 2025)

US immigration laws

The main US immigration law framework is primarily governed by the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which was first codified in 1952 and has been amended several times since then. This act covers the rules and procedures for entry, stay, work, exit, and removal from the US. According to Congress, US immigration policy contains two major aspects. One is to facilitate migration flows of foreign nationals into the US, and the other focuses on immigration enforcement and

removal. Immigration procedures authorised by Congress in the INA and other laws are carried out by several executive branch departments and agencies, including the DHS and ICE. This means that the INA has full authority to carry out immigration enforcement functions in fields such as border enforcement, interior enforcement, detention, and removal. (US Congress, 2025)

Evolution of US deportation approaches

The approaches of removing non-citizens have evolved over the years under different presidential administrations, going from selective enforcement to mass deportation. In the 1950s, under the initial INA, the government's power to deport individuals based on their ideology was strengthened as a result of fears stemming from the Cold War.

Later on, US policy shifted its focus from controlling who could enter the country to heightened enforcement against those already in the country, targeting undocumented workers and sanctioning the employers who knowingly hired them by implementing the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986. (Simpson, 1986)

As of more recent times, the Obama administration (from 2009 to 2017) saw a record high number of deportations in 2012 (over 407,000 individuals compared to Trump's peak of 269,000 in 2019), but also a shift in the way that these individuals were being deported. Instead of raiding workplaces and attempting to detain as many illegal individuals as possible, the enforcement priorities of the DHS shifted towards non-citizens carrying serious criminal charges against them. (TRAC, 2025)

This was also the period in which DACA, or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals programme, was established in 2012. The main aim of this programme was to provide temporary protection from deportation for undocumented youth who met certain criteria, providing a reprieve from the constant fear of removal for many individuals and their families. (Howard University, 2016)

Current Situation:

Mass deportation under the Trump administration

Beginning from 2017-2021, the Trump administration pursued an uncompromising immigration agenda that ended discretionary policies and reinforced the power of ICE. One of the notable things he did in this first era was to revive large-scale raids for deportation.

Trump further widened his pursuit of undocumented immigrants and even attempted to bring an end to DACA, though solid litigation structures largely prevented it. The administration also introduced stricter asylum policies, such as the Migrant Protection Protocols (“Remain in Mexico”), which forced asylum seekers to wait outside of the US while their immigration cases were processed. They also escalated militarisation on the southern border and famously pushed for the construction of the border wall. (American Immigration Council, 2025d)

“Remain in Mexico” was an openly disliked policy by the Mexican government, and it was also considered a major humanitarian issue in terms of rights, as deported individuals/asylum-seekers experienced dangerous and unsanitary conditions, the denial of their legal rights, and the heightened risk of violence while they waited in Mexico. (Vinson, 2020)

Post Trump’s first term in office, President Joe Biden attempted to reverse some of the Trump administration’s more serious policies that did not agree with his left-centrist ideals, such as major worksite raids, while still continuing certain restrictive measures. An example of such a measure would be how Biden signed an executive order in June 2024 allowing officials to deport migrants without processing their asylum claims if border crossings exceeded certain thresholds.

When he resumed office in 2025, the second Trump Administration made a major shift towards developing unprecedented anti-immigrant policies and carrying out mass deportations. To speed up these processes, the administration signed legislation that provided about 171 billion USD to be allocated for immigration enforcement, detention, and deportation, while simultaneously diverting federal officers from their respective duties to assist in immigration-related actions. Along with this, large-scale workplace raids also made a comeback to increase detainee numbers. (American Immigration Council, 2025e)

Balancing state and local cooperation with sanctuary jurisdiction

As of October 2025, ICE has significantly expanded its 287(g) programme, which deputises state and local law enforcement to carry out federal immigration enforcement. There are currently three 287(g) models in operation; the Jail Enforcement, Task Force, and Warrant Service Officer models. The Jail Enforcement Model is designed to identify and process removable individuals (with criminal or pending criminal charges) who have been arrested by state or local law enforcement agencies, whereas the Task Force Model serves to simply enhance the power of law enforcement agencies with ICE oversight during their routine police duties. Most significantly, the Warrant Service Officer programme allows ICE to “train, certify and authorise state and local law enforcement officers to serve and execute

administrative warrants on aliens in their agency's jail". A map of which states this programme affects can be found below in Figure 1.

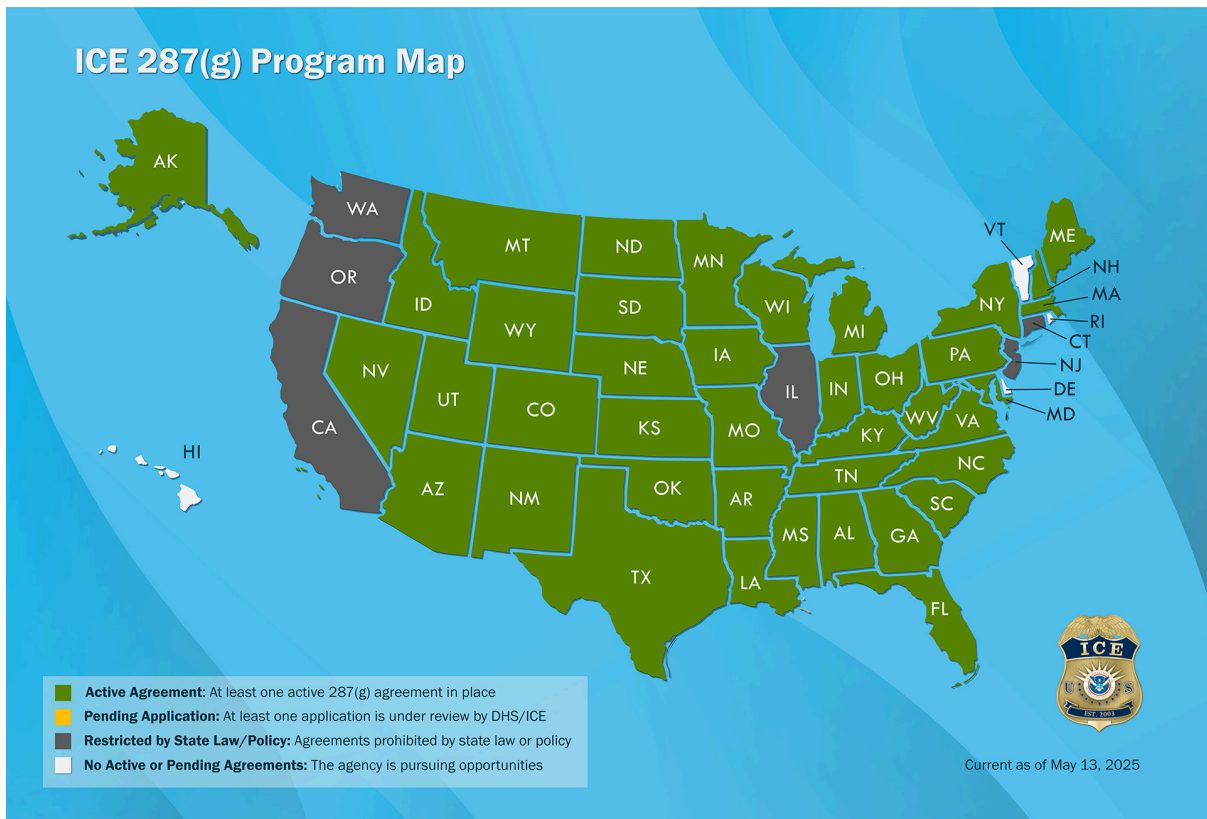


Figure 1. A map of the United States showing which states are affected by the ICE programme 287(g) and how they are affected. Source: [ICE](#).

Socioeconomic effects of mass deportations

The main socioeconomic issues discussed in the media that are exacerbated by mass deportation often fall along the lines of labour markets and community disruptions. For example, deportations have created issues in sectors such as agriculture and construction that rely heavily on migrant labour and are otherwise operating with shortages in supply of their goods or services due to a sudden rise in production costs, as wages of documented workers are often higher.

In terms of community impacts, families are constantly being separated, and children born in the US (US citizens) are often left stranded alone without any parental support. This significantly impacts the stability of families who are migrants, documented or not, as mass deportations often occur with some racist intent backing them, thus leading to many families of colour being targeted either way.

While considering local economies, there will inevitably be reduced consumer spending as the population decreases due to deportations. Businesses may close down (especially in immigrant-dense neighbourhoods) due to a lack of demand, and

the financial stability of future generations of these small and medium enterprise owners is put at risk.

Within these socioeconomic effects, human rights concerns have also arisen, namely in terms of arbitrary detention, lack of due process, and the unseen dangers of refoulement or displacement to third countries. These are all factors that collectively highlight the social, economic, and humanitarian consequences of mass deportations, and may be used in arguments during debate.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views:

US federal government (DHS, ICE)

It is evident that within the realm of immigration and deportation, the current US federal government, as undertaken by the Trump administration, is relatively in favour of mass deportation, strict border enforcement, and the idea of retaining a relatively homogenous land of citizens and LPRs instead of welcoming an influx of immigrants at any period.

The administration claims to view immigration through a mainly national security-focused lens, employing law enforcement and citing sovereignty over humanitarian considerations. As such, the DHS and ICE have been granted high levels of jurisdictional power to identify, detain, and remove undocumented individuals as efficiently as possible, even if this does entail the opportunity costs of diverting resources from other agencies, law enforcement-related or not.

State and local governments

Though the federal government seems to present a clear-cut response to the issue, there are several discrepancies between the nation and individual states. For example, the relatively conservative-leaning states such as Texas, Florida, and Arizona have largely aligned with ICE through agreements like the 287(g) programme, but several progressive states (e.g. California, New York, Illinois) have adopted "sanctuary" policies that limit cooperation with ICE detainer requests and prioritise community safety over immigration enforcement.

This lack of consistency within the nation simply goes to show the ideological divisions across the US, and yet also the potential of rooting for local autonomy in immigration governance.

Democratic and republic ruling parties

Evidently, democratic and republican representatives will have views that differ in the context of immigration. As such, their motivations can be vaguely presented using the following descriptors.

Democrats

The democratic party tends to have a history of supporting a relatively humanitarian and rights-based approach to immigration and deportation. They are known for being advocates of reform in the ways one can enter and stay in the country legally, and even acquire citizenship (in the context of long-term residents).

They emphasise legal oversight and the accountability of ICE and detention facilities, while also being in favour of sanctuary policies and the provision of legal representation for migrants. They generally want to present the US's deportation practices to the world as being up to par in terms of international human rights standards.

Republicans

Contrastingly, the Republican party advocates for increasing deportation efficiency and reinforcing existing immigration laws. They are known to be backers of ICE, and have historically diverted local law enforcement towards deportation practices (see the 287(g) programme).

In a similar manner, they also endorse government investment when it comes to developing border infrastructure and surveillance technology to better keep track of immigration records. While they aim to deport aliens that are already residing within the US, Republicans also seem to be very keen to reduce incentives for illegal immigration through consequential deterrence and even instilling fear or causing harsh economic setbacks for immigrants via new DHS practices.

Affected migrants, foreign governments, and receiving states

In the most likely scenario of today, undocumented migrants are faced with the risks of detention, family separation, and deportation by ICE. These individuals are ostracised by the government and most right-skewed supporters of it, and often have limited access to legal counsel and humanitarian protection, which simply exacerbates their vulnerability.

In terms of foreign governments and receiving states, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, there are major struggles to reintegrate deported nationals into their societies and economies, as an influx of immigrating individuals means that labour markets and social services are often strained. If this occurs without ample prior coordination between the nations and the US, it is likely that diplomatic tensions will rise and third-country deportations may become more common of a practice. Notably, states which have raised such concerns include Mexico and El Salvador. (Soffer, 2025)

Additionally, according to an article by the Migration Policy Institute, since 2010, the number of migrants in the region roughly doubled. This caused increasing difficulties for governments, and caused displaced Venezuelans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Cubans in the middle class to struggle. (Chaves-González, 2025)

As a result, certain governments have agreed to repatriation agreements to manage returns more humanely (especially for their citizens), whereas others (mainly the third-countries) criticise the US for externalising its migration control responsibilities and impacting economies of weaker nations as a result.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events:

As this is a predominantly US-related internal matter without several significant physical human rights violations, the UN hasn't been actively intervening in the Trump Administration's actions in a way that would blatantly undermine the sovereignty of the US federal government. However, it is evident that the UN has engaged in deportation and migration-related issues over the years, as seen in the treaties and protocols listed below. Apart from that, listed below are some of the relevant and or aforementioned bills and acts that have been passed by the US Congress.

- [Homeland Security Act](#), 24 June 2002
 - This act was the first one to bring about change in terms of immigration and safety after the restructuring of the government post-9/11, namely with the creation of the DHS and thus also ICE.
- Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 16 December 1966, ([A/RES/2198\(XXI\)](#))
 - This resolution was derived from the 1951 Refugee Convention and is now referred to as the 1967 Protocol. Both of these articles considered

and first ratified the idea of the non-refoulement principle in international law.

- [Secure Communities Program](#): A Comprehensive Plan to Identify and Remove Criminal Aliens, 28 March 2008 (Implemented by DHS/ICE)
 - This domestic US programme entailed the sharing of fingerprint data between local police precincts and ICE, leading to a surge in deportations, even if individuals had little to no criminal background. Human rights groups heavily criticised this approach, and thus it was temporarily suspended under the Obama administration before being reinstated during the first Trump era.
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 18 December 1990 ([A/RES/45/158](#))
 - This convention is one that effectively outlines the rights of migrant workers, regardless of legal status. Although the US has not ratified it, it still reinforces global expectations for humane treatment of migrants and sets a normative standard that contrasts with certain U.S. deportation practices, such as prolonged detention and family separation.

Possible Solutions:

Democrats

1. Strengthening oversight mechanisms through ways such as, but not limited to, independent monitors and human rights audits of ICE detention facilities.
2. Strengthening legal obligations in US law to align its domestic deportation policy with human rights norms, including factors such as, but not limited to, protection against refoulement and detention limits.
3. Prohibiting or restricting third-country deportation of migrants unless safety is ensured and consent is given to a reasonable extent by the individual, the US, and the host country.
4. Limiting or encouraging reform in terms of expedited removal procedures by ensuring thorough review of cases, adequate provision of legal representation, and the maintenance of safeguard laws.
5. Encouraging US states and counties to adopt policies that are in accordance with sanctuary protection measures.

Republicans

1. Increasing cooperation with host or origin countries to improve the rates of safe and humane repatriation (with the addition of monitoring).

2. Encouraging global cooperation in terms of supporting international frameworks for migration (particularly emigration from the US and not immigration to the US), burden sharing, and resettlement.
3. Increasing investment in border infrastructure and surveillance technology to ensure secure and lawful migration processes.
4. Increasing efficiency within immigration enforcement agencies to reduce bureaucratic delays.

Bibliography:

Useful Links:

1. [This covers the fundamental ideas of deportation and how immigration enforcement works in real life scenarios](#)
2. [This link teaches delegates the proper terminology to be using in the context of immigration](#)
3. [This link will help delegates understand who their policies will be impacting - acts as a case study tool](#)

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