

ESCALATING IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT PRACTICES

2025 Legislative Lowlights

DECEMBER 2025

Across the United States, federal and state legislative activity in 2025 has changed the landscape for immigration in significant ways. Ballooning funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) deployment of national guard troops, and militarization of federal immigration agents are exacerbating the violence and chaos of immigration enforcement and the over-policing and surveillance of immigrant communities. These federal developments are working hand-in-hand with, and in many cases are fueling, in-state developments that make certain parts of the country more openly hostile to immigrants than ever before. Although this brief spotlights legislative activity in Texas and Florida, it also covers a non-exhaustive list of other states that have recently enacted a patchwork of anti-immigrant laws and policies seeking to harm and hinder immigrant communities and their allies. In response, affected communities nationwide have been engaging in ongoing advocacy and active litigation to challenge and resist these regressive efforts.

I. FEDERAL DEVELOPMENTS

A. HR 1 OR THE “ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL”

At the federal level, [HR 1](#) (also known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill”) includes unprecedented increases in funding for immigration and border enforcement. Signed into law on July 4, 2025, HR 1 allotted \$170 billion in additional funding for enforcement activities to DHS, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (“CBP”). For [example](#), CBP’s FY2025 total appropriations were about \$20 billion versus HR 1’s allotment of \$64 billion. [Similarly](#).

continued...

ICE's FY2025 total appropriations were about \$10 billion, with an infusion of HR 1 totaling about \$75 billion. Funding was also set aside for the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) for activities related to the military's operations and ongoing presence along parts of the U.S.-Mexico border. HR 1 [represents](#) the "largest single package of DHS supplemental appropriations ever put before Congress."

Importantly, HR 1 was passed through a congressional budgetary process called "reconciliation," which not only allowed the bill to pass more easily with simple majorities in both chambers of Congress, but also did not require funds to be spent according to specific directives in the bill. This means the funds can be spent as the receiving agencies (CBP and DHS) see fit, hindering any congressional oversight and accountability efforts. The funds must be spent by September 2029, further encouraging immigration agencies to prioritize escalating enforcement activity in order to quickly spend down the funds.

Priorities in HR 1 include:

\$51.6 billion	Border wall construction and CBP facilities
\$7.8 billion	CBP agents, vehicles, and training center improvements
\$6.2 billion	Border technology and "vetting"
\$450 million	State and local law enforcement agencies supporting border enforcement
\$2.1 billion	Border processing and expedited removal of all immigrants, including unaccompanied children
\$3.3 billion	Immigrant prosecutions, compensating local jails for incarcerating immigrants, and salaries for immigration judges
\$45 billion	Expanding detention facility capacity

continued...

\$29.9 billion	Enforcement and removal operations, ICE agent hiring (with a goal of 10,000 agents), transportation costs, and family detention
\$10 billion	Reimbursing DHS for border enforcement activity
\$1 billion	DOD immigration and border enforcement activity

According to the American Immigration Council, the “[overwhelming majority](#)” of funding for detention expansion will likely go to private companies contracted to build and run detention facilities.

As an illustration, because ICE has broad discretion in how to spend its HR 1 funds, the population of people in ICE detention could [skyrocket](#) to 125,000 beds or higher well before the September 2029 deadline—a number that falls just below the current population of the entire federal prison system. As of April 2025, ICE detention capacity was [about](#) 63,000 beds.

HR 1 also [imposes](#) fee hikes or new fees for immigrants applying for various types of immigration relief or benefits before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”) and the immigration court. Fees are imposed on immigrants seeking forms of humanitarian relief including applications for asylum, Temporary Protected Status, motions submitted in immigration court, and much more. As just one example, HR 1 implements a new [\\$250 fee](#) for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status applications, a classification for juveniles who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, allowing them to apply for lawful permanent resident status if approved. These new or increased fees exacerbate the existing financial burden on immigrants trying to navigate the complex USCIS and immigration court systems, creating even steeper barriers to access immigration relief. Importantly, most fees increased or implemented by HR 1 do not qualify for [fee waivers](#), erecting an insurmountable

continued...

barrier to relief for many immigrants without access to financial resources.

Critically, HR 1's investments in punitive immigration enforcement came at the cost of massive cuts to Medicaid totaling almost [\\$1 trillion](#) over 10 years and cuts to other critical, federally-funded services that save millions of lives. Almost half of all children in the United States are covered by Medicaid, and thanks to HR 1's cuts, states cannot find ways to shield them from harm. Further, 6 million adults could lose expanded Medicaid coverage due to new, onerous requirements. The debilitating funding tradeoff included in HR 1 will be felt by Americans in all communities. Instead of health care and critical services, the ACLU [estimates](#) that HR 1's immigration enforcement funding will provide American communities with "an immigration police force larger than most of the world's militaries and detention camps that could, over time, hold 750,000 children, immigrants with legal status, and other long-time residents from our communities."

B. NATIONAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION AND MILITARIZATION

On his first day in office, President Donald Trump [declared](#) a national emergency "at the Southern border of the United States," playing up racialized anti-immigrant stereotypes about criminality, drug trafficking, and more. The declaration authorized the deployment of the U.S. Armed Forces to respond to the "emergency," resulting in a U.S.-Mexico border patrolled heavily by military troops, not just CBP. New military zones cover about [one third](#) of the U.S.-Mexico border, across more than 500 miles in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Oversight of the militarized zones is divided between U.S. Army bases in Fort Bliss, Texas, and Fort Huachuca, Arizona. As of July 2025, these zones were patrolled by at least 7,600 members of the Armed Forces with the authority to arrest and detain immigrants who enter the United States without authorization. Declaring these border areas as military zones has enabled the federal government to charge immigrants, many who are seeking asylum, with trespassing on these zones. This move both criminalizes seeking humanitarian relief and creates a symbolic image of wrongfully equating asylum seekers as enemy combatants. Since

continued...

the declaration and the militarization of the border, more than [1,400 immigrants](#) have been charged with allegedly “trespassing” on military territory, a charge that carries a possible sentence of 18 months in prison—on top of potential federal charges for illegal entry.

C. DEPLOYMENT OF THE NATIONAL GUARD TO U.S. CITIES

Starting in the summer of 2025, the Trump Administration threatened to deploy— and then began [actually deploying](#)—National Guard troops to select American cities (all of which were on the [DOJ list](#) of “sanctuary” jurisdictions) under the guise of fighting crime or quelling supposed unrest. The Trump Administration vindictively [deployed](#) thousands of National Guard troops to Los Angeles, California, to suppress protests against ICE raids and to Washington, D.C., with the latter being part of a larger, temporary “[federal takeover](#)” of the District. [Deployment](#) of National Guard troops (working with other federal law enforcement agencies like the FBI) to Chicago, Illinois, to Portland, Oregon, and to Memphis, Tennessee, followed in September and October 2025, though multiple lawsuits to halt the deployments followed with varying results.

These deployments represent a terrifying ramping up of federal overreach into states and cities to further the Trump Administration’s enforcement agenda, often accompanied by violence from law enforcement officials. The “federal takeover” of Washington, has led to [inflated](#) numbers of arrests, the bulk of which consist of immigration-related arrests, which are generally based on civil violations. Videos circulating on social media show that ICE activity in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area is intensifying. One viral [incident](#) in Maryland showed an ICE officer brandishing a gun at a passerby observing an arrest of a man who had previously [warned](#) others online about ICE enforcement in the area just weeks before his own arrest. In Los Angeles, protests against heightened immigration enforcement actions provided the Trump Administration with [pretext](#) to deploy [4,000](#) National Guard troops and U.S. Marines over the objections of California Governor Gavin Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. When the state of California sued to stop the deployment, court

continued...

[filings](#) revealed that the deployment was executed without any consultation or communication with Governor Newsom's office. The state of California also argued that the deployment violated the 10th Amendment, which protects state sovereignty and rights. The Trump Administration's use of the National Guard in Los Angeles was eventually ruled [illegal](#) in federal court in early September 2025.

In October, ICE conducted a violent "[military-style](#)" raid of an apartment building on the South Side of Chicago, with agents rappelling from helicopters, kicking in doors, throwing flash-bang grenades, and zip-tying and arresting hundreds of adults and children—many of whom are Black residents of the area. According to TIME, "Photos of the aftermath show toys and shoes littering the apartment hallways, evidence of those pulled from their beds by the operation that included FBI and Homeland Security agents." The raid, along with escalating enforcement in Chicago at large, has led to protests concentrated outside the Broadview ICE detention facility in Illinois, which have attracted additional National Guard and law enforcement suppression. ICE officials even [shot](#) one woman in the Broadview area during a "patrol" operation. In Memphis, White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller told federally-deputized officers they are "[unleashed](#)," to "bulldoze criminal elements" in the city before the National Guard deployment becomes official.

On October 4, 2025, a federal judge temporarily [enjoined](#) the deployment of National Guard troops to Portland, Oregon, but two judges from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals [allowed](#) the deployment to proceed. In late October, the majority of judges on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to [reconsider](#) the court's prior decision to allow the deployment. Despite ephemeral court setbacks, the Trump Administration continues to namecheck [cities](#) like Baltimore, New York, and New Orleans as possible future targets of these militarized deployments.

continued...

II. SPOTLIGHT ON SUPPRESSION: TEXAS AND FLORIDA

A. TEXAS

Texas continues to lead the way in multi-prong, state government-wide efforts to marginalize and target immigrants and immigration of all types. From opening a new detention center, to mandating local cooperation with ICE, to militarizing large swaths of the border, to recently [denying](#) commercial driver's licenses to DACA recipients, refugees, or people with asylum, Texas has carved out a legacy of state authoritarianism.

1. COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD AND CBP

In February 2025, the Texas National Guard signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) ("MOU") with CBP, authorizing Texas National Guard troops to participate in immigration enforcement. The MOU-tied directly to the National Emergency Declaration of January 2025- authorizes the Texas National Guard to no longer merely arrest people for "trespassing" (as previously authorized under [Operation Lone Star](#)) but also to question, arrest, detain, and transport people for alleged immigration violations. Similar to the [287\(g\) program](#) (which authorizes state and local police to act as immigration enforcement agents), the MOU allows Texas National Guard troops to stop people they suspect of lacking immigration status, a practice ripe for abuse and racial profiling. In September 2025, [members](#) of the Texas National Guard were deployed to support the CBP Laredo Sector, increasing the [militarized](#) look and feel of communities near the U.S.-Mexico border.

2. OPENING THE FORT BLISS DETENTION CENTER

The expansion of detention and militarization in Texas continue at an undeterred pace. Texas [leads](#) the nation in both the number of immigration detention facilities operating in the state and the number of immigrants detained in said

continued...

facilities. Texas, known as the “[epicenter](#)” of immigration detention, uses facilities located in rural, inaccessible areas, creating significant difficulties for family or attorneys to access people who are detained. In August 2025, the Trump Administration opened a new detention facility at Fort Bliss, Texas, a “tent city” in the scorching heat intended to hold 5,000 beds, making it the largest ICE facility in the nation. The DOD [awarded](#) a \$1.26 billion contract to a Virginia company to build the facility in July 2025—a company which appeared to have [no experience](#) building or maintaining detention centers. Importantly, the ACLU [describes](#) the facility’s location as calculated: Fort Bliss, a military base home to 90,000 service members, allows the facility to hide behind the “walls of a military installation and away from public view [...] a move to militarize immigration enforcement, reduce transparency, and fast-track deportations with minimal accountability.” In September 2025, the Washington Post reported that internal inspectors from ICE found at least 60 [violations](#) of federal detention standards at Fort Bliss. That same month, Congresswoman Veronica Escobar (TX-16) conducted an [oversight visit](#) to the facility, where she saw about 1,500 immigrants who reported [experiencing](#) unsafe food and water, harmful conditions, and a complete lack of communication with the outside world—including legal counsel. Fort Bliss has been used by multiple presidential [administrations](#) to detain immigrants, including the emergency detention of unaccompanied minors during the Biden Administration from 2021 to 2023. The military base also has a history of poor and inhumane conditions, which led to a number of [whistleblowers](#) coming forward with reports of “harms to children, including lack of medical care, serious case management flaws resulting in lengthy detention, and poor conditions for children particularly held in enormous tent structures.”

The Fort Bliss Detention Center, alongside the preexisting detention facilities, continues a little-known piece of Texas history: the legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service (“INS”) operated three [internment camps](#) during World War II. The camps held Japanese Americans arrested by the Federal Bureau of

continued...

Investigation, as well as about 3,000 Japanese, German, and Italian nationals (all Axis powers) residing in Latin American countries who were “deported” to the United States. According to the Texas State Historical Association, during World War II, Axis nationals were “deported” to the United States for security purposes and to serve as hostages in exchange for American hostages taken by Japan. However, Latin American countries often deported Axis nationals “arbitrarily as a result of racial prejudice[.]” With the seemingly unlimited expansion of immigration detention within the state, Texas revives the mistakes of its past, carving out a shameful legacy of arbitrary detention on the basis of race and nationality.

3. THE LONG REACH OF OPERATION LONE STAR: CONTINUED FUNDING AND ENFORCEMENT

On the legislative side, Texas continued to introduce and pass bills that expanded the state-led immigration system of Operation Lone Star (“OLS”) and that further increased harm against Texans by [wasting](#) valuable state resources on enforcement. The biennial state budget passed in June 2025 with the first [reduction](#) to border enforcement operations since funding expanded drastically in 2021 under OLS. Despite a reduction of the budget’s proposed funding level, the final funding amount of \$3.4 billion is still four times higher than the pre-OLS funding level of \$800 million for border enforcement operations. Notably, Governor Greg Abbott submitted a [reimbursement](#) request to Congress in January 2025, citing OLS’s skyrocketing costs and enthusiastic involvement in “supporting” federal enforcement of immigration law. Although HR 1 included a \$10 billion grant program for state and local government reimbursement, it does not appear as though Governor Abbott has recouped the costs of the state’s voluntary (and arguably [illegal](#)) enforcement activities. It is worth noting that Governor Abbott’s ploy is demonstrably audacious: Texas has made a name for itself by encroaching on exclusive federal authority to enforce immigration law, and is now demanding to be reimbursed by the federal government for that previously unrequested

continued...

encroachment. According to one immigration [scholar](#) analyzing the HR 1 reimbursement program, “although Congress didn’t reference Texas in the law, the provision mirrors language in a [reimbursement] proposal sponsored by the state’s two Senators as well as a similar proposal in the House led by Representative Chip Roy.”

In June 2025, Governor Greg Abbott signed [SB 8](#) into law after its passage through the Texas legislature, which mandated 287(g) agreements in [234 of Texas’s 254 counties](#). These agreements deputize local law enforcement to act as immigration officers, expanding the reach of federal immigration enforcement. SB 8 also creates a staggered grant program for counties to offset the costs of partnering with ICE, and provides for legal penalties for sheriffs who fail to enter into 287(g) agreements. Notably, the state grant program is [limited](#) and does not presently have enough funds to offset the estimated costs to be incurred by all counties mandated to enter into 287(g) agreements. Other anti-immigrant bills were proposed in the legislature but eventually failed to pass: [SJR 1](#), which proposed a state constitutional amendment making certain immigrants charged with a felony totally ineligible for bail, and [HB 1554](#), which proposed outlawing public legal defense funds for immigrants in the state.

4. THE “REPEAL” OF THE TEXAS DREAM ACT

Legislative proposals to repeal the 24-year old Texas Dream Act, which provided for in-state tuition for undocumented students, [failed](#) in the legislature. Passed in 2001, the Texas Dream Act was the first legislation of its kind in the country, a watershed moment that promoted equitable access to higher education for all students regardless of immigration status. Just two days after the 2025 legislative session ended, the DOJ filed a complaint in federal court challenging the Texas Dream Act’s legality. Instead of defending the Texas Dream Act in court as expected, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton agreed to a consent judgment

continued...

with the DOJ within just six hours of the complaint's filing on June 4, 2025. The consent judgment effectively repealed the Texas Dream Act, immediately [impacting](#) 57,000 undocumented students pursuing higher education and 197,000 undocumented students on track to graduate from Texas high schools. It is clear from the legislative record that repealing the Texas Dream Act did not have requisite support in the Texas legislature. Instead of honoring the state's legislative process, the Trump Administration's DOJ used extraordinary authority to reach its end goal. This confounding timeline represents dangerous new territory for collusion between the Trump Administration and ideologically-aligned state governments.

5. ABUSE OF SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

In 2025, Governor Abbott has taken advantage of his [ability](#) to call an unlimited number of special, 30-day legislative sessions to accomplish his policy goals. In the first special session called on July 21, 2025, Governor Abbott set an 18-item [agenda](#) including consequential topics like flood preparedness and redistricting. The redistricting proposal included [redrawn](#) maps that would flip five Democratic seats to favor Republicans in the state, which would go on to potentially solidify Republican control of Congress in the 2026 midterm elections. In protest, Texas House Democrats broke quorum and left the state for an extended period of time, leaving the state legislature unable to move forward with votes. After adjourning on August 15, Governor Abbott immediately called a second special session, during which Governor Abbott [expanded](#) his agenda to 24 topics. On August 21, the redistricting proposal was passed during the second special session. The second special session also passed a bill that would expand law enforcement authority in Harris County to contract with homeowner associations, school districts, and municipal utility districts to provide additional policing for them without the approval of the county commissioner's court. [Critics](#) of the bill are concerned that it erodes the county government's checks and balances, and places enhanced

continued...

burdens on taxpayers who pay more for duplicative policing-policing which now includes immigration enforcement in most of the state. The highly consequential bills passed in the 2025 special sessions create a dangerous precedent for the possibility of future anti-immigrant laws rushed through the legislative process at Governor Abbott's behest.

B. FLORIDA

In Florida, legislative efforts to overhaul and further restrict immigration found success, including the repeal of in-state tuition for undocumented students and the facilitation of harsher enforcement within the state. In February 2025, Governor Ron DeSantis signed two consequential and wide-reaching immigration-related bills into Florida law: Senate Bill 2-C ("SB 2-C") and Senate Bill 4-C ("SB 4-C"). The [SB 2-C](#) law [repeals](#) the 10-year-old Florida law that created access to in-state tuition for undocumented students at Florida colleges and universities. This repeal impacts not only future college enrollees, but current college students who are forced to [scramble](#) to find ways to fund their remaining years of higher education, or leave higher education altogether.

Beyond that, [SB 2-C](#) focuses on the infrastructure of immigration enforcement in Florida. It creates a Florida State Board of Immigration Enforcement (with an included State Immigration Enforcement Council within the Board), tasked with coordinating and assisting federal and state law enforcement agencies in enforcing "federal immigration laws and other matters related to the enforcement of federal immigration laws." The Board will be composed of the governor and a cabinet of appointees. The law also creates a new felony penalty for undocumented people who vote in, or aid others in voting in elections; prohibits undocumented people from receiving driver's licenses or identification cards from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles; creates a new felony sentencing scheme for people newly-classified as "dangerous unauthorized alien offenders"; requires the state attorney general to begin judicial proceedings against law enforcement agencies to enforce compliance

continued...

with [ICE detainees](#) (request from ICE to hold a person an additional 48 hours after their release from criminal custody); and creates the “Unauthorized Alien Transport Program” in the Florida Division of Emergency Management. Additionally, SB 2-C also [allocates](#) almost \$300 million for state law enforcement agencies to carry out the state’s immigration objectives, including the hiring of 50 new law enforcement officers, offering a \$1,000 bonus for immigration enforcement officers, and grants for training.

The SB [4-C](#) law focuses on criminalizing immigration in a number of ways: creates criminal penalties for illegal entry or reentry into the state and enhancing penalties for second or subsequent convictions under the law; preventing anyone arrested of illegal entry or reentry from participating in diversion programs to avoid incarceration; and creating criminal penalties for people who enter or are present in Florida with an active order of removal (i.e., a deportation order) or who return to Florida after being deported from the United States. Most alarmingly, SB 4-C requires the imposition of the [death penalty](#) for undocumented people who are convicted or found guilty of a capital felony. The Florida Immigrant Coalition, the Farmworker Association of Florida and two individual plaintiffs represented by the ACLU [challenged](#) SB 4-C in court, claiming the law is unconstitutional. As of June 2025, a federal court [upheld](#) a preliminary injunction preventing SB 4-C from being enforced statewide while the litigation continues.

III. A RACE TO THE BOTTOM: ADDITIONAL STATE DEVELOPMENTS

While Florida and Texas continue to be legislative trendsetters when it comes to anti-immigrant efforts, other states have entered a race to the bottom, using creative and wide-ranging methods to harm immigrant communities. Many of the states discussed below have [imitated](#) Texas SB 4, the state’s infamous deportation law, and continue to follow suit in passing regressive immigration legislation whenever possible.

A. GEORGIA

continued...

In February 2025, the Georgia Senate [passed](#) Senate Bill 21 (“SB 21”), a bill that would enhance penalties for jurisdictions that have “sanctuary” policies and refuse to collaborate with ICE officials. The bill also waived sovereign immunity in localities that didn’t comply with the state’s prohibition on “sanctuary” policies. Waiving sovereign immunity would allow the state to sue local governments accused of being “sanctuary jurisdictions,” which have been [illegal](#) in Georgia since 2009. After Senate passage, the bill failed to pass through the House and become law. Although the bill failed in 2025, Georgia’s two year legislative calendar means it may come back in 2026, or in a special legislative session. Organizers have vowed to remain [vigilant](#) to prevent future attempts at passage.

B. IDAHO

In March 2025, Idaho Governor Brad Little signed [House Bill 83](#), also known as the “Immigration Cooperation and Enforcement Act” into law. Mirroring many of the provisions found in [Texas SB 4](#), the law creates the crimes of illegal entry or reentry into the state of Idaho from a foreign country. It does not mandate 287(g) agreements with ICE, but prevents any jurisdiction in the state from prohibiting cooperation with federal law enforcement authorities. The law creates a sentencing enhancement, establishing a mandatory minimum of five years of imprisonment for adults convicted of dangerous crimes who are also found to have an order of removal or who were previously deported. The law further mandates cooperation with ICE detainers, and encourages information sharing between state and local law enforcement and ICE. Although the law was enacted, the ACLU of Idaho [filed](#) a lawsuit challenging the law’s legitimacy, and the law is temporarily blocked from taking effect while litigation proceeds.

C. IOWA

As of January 2025, a federal court upheld a temporary block of Iowa’s [SF 2340](#) (creating new crimes for illegal entry and reentry into the state for people without

continued...

immigration status—a Texas SB 4 copycat law) while litigation continues. Iowa House Study Bill 187 ([“HSB 187”](#)), introduced in the Iowa House in February 2025, would mandate participation in [287\(g\) programs](#) for all state and local law enforcement agencies. Iowa House Study Bill 285 ([“HSB 285,”](#) later known as [HF 946](#)) proposes Class D felony charges for elected sheriffs and other law enforcement officers who [“knowingly and intentionally”](#) fail to comply with the state’s laws regarding federal immigration law enforcement. Class D felony charges are punishable by up to five years in jail and fines of between \$1,025 and \$10,245. Both bills were passed through subcommittees, but have not passed out of chambers or been signed into law.

Outside of Iowa’s state legislature, in August 2025 the Iowa National Guard was [authorized](#) to support federal immigration enforcement under the same DOD authority used to authorize the Virginia National Guard. According to Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, twenty Iowa National Guard members will “provide administrative and logistical support to Iowa-based ICE officials in enforcing immigration laws” until November 2025.

D. LOUISIANA

A slew of fiercely anti-immigrant bills passed through the Louisiana legislature and were signed into law in 2025. [Act 399](#) makes “knowingly committing any act intended to hinder, delay, prevent, or otherwise interfere with or thwart federal immigration enforcement efforts” punishable with a charge of obstruction of justice, and authorizes public officials or employees who fail to cooperate with immigration enforcement to be charged with “malfeasance in office.” [Act 264](#) created the “Fugitive Apprehension Unit” within the state Department of Justice, tasked with “apprehending fugitives” while assisting state and federal agencies with immigration enforcement (the term “fugitive” goes undefined in the law). [Act 292](#) creates a notice of voting restriction and a restriction code on driver licenses and state-issued identification cards that are applicable to lawful permanent residents but not U.S. citizens. [Act 436](#) prevents some undocumented people who are involved in car

continued...

accidents from receiving general damages and specific damages (financial losses related to the accident). Act 436 makes a narrow exception and may allow damages in certain cases where undocumented people who have car insurance file car accident claims against uninsured people.

A pair of laws related to surveilling, tracking, and [sharing](#) information about immigrants also went into effect in June and August 2025, respectively. [Act 419](#) requires public agencies that provide services, like the state Department of Education, Department of Corrections and the Department of Children & Family Services, and all public colleges and universities, to collect data about the immigration status of people who receive services. The agencies and institutions are required to then report the data to the state and the public on “the cost” of providing services to immigrants. [Act 351](#) requires state agencies that provide public assistance (like food stamps and Medicaid) to collect personal data of people who have applied for and been found ineligible for benefits and report that data directly to ICE. The laws are particularly burdensome for immigrant parents, who can apply for [public benefits](#) for U.S. citizen children regardless of their own status-however, as heads of household the parents must provide identifying information about themselves to state agencies. Advocates fear the laws will discourage immigrant parents from applying for benefits their children are legally entitled to receive.

In addition to harmful legislative developments, Louisiana has [spearheaded](#) a significant expansion of its immigrant detention and deportation capacity. Louisiana has [nine](#) dedicated ICE detention centers ([more](#) than any other state besides Texas) after converting nearly half a dozen correctional facilities for use as immigration detention facilities. Most facilities are rural or remote and difficult for advocates, attorneys, or family members to access, and one is a “staging facility” for rapid deportations. Many of the high-profile attempted deportations of 2025, including [Mahmoud Kahlil](#), involved immigrants being whisked away to remote Louisiana detention facilities far from their homes or even places of arrest by ICE.

continued...

In September 2025, Louisiana opened a new ICE facility called “Camp 57” at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, also known as “Angola”: the infamous 18,000-acre prison which remains the country’s largest maximum-security prison. Angola, the site of a massive former plantation, is [notorious](#) due to decades of [allegations](#) of forcing incarcerated people to work in dangerous conditions for little to no pay along with other abuses and failures in care. The facility is slated to house 400 immigrant men. The opening of the ICE detention facility at Angola is layered with racial symbolism. Louisiana has been [described](#) as “the world’s epicenter of incarceration,” with more people incarcerated per capita than any other state and with the longest prison sentences. Given that Black people—and men specifically—are incarcerated at [disproportionately](#) higher rates than people of other races, and with a [74](#) percent Black incarcerated population, Angola continues to represent a stark reminder of systemic inequality and brutality. As mentioned above, the prison stands on the site of an enormous plantation where enslaved Black people labored without pay and endured unspeakable atrocities. Today at Angola, [incarcerated](#) men work field crops including cotton, corn, soybeans, and sugarcane with limited access to water, rest, or hygienic facilities for just two cents per hour while supervised by officers on horseback. The ACLU notes, “[t]his agricultural work has direct roots in the Black chattel slavery of the South.”

DHS Secretary Kristi Noem has [confirmed](#) the choice of location for “Camp 57” was purposeful: Angola’s “notorious” reputation was “absolutely” part of the Trump Administration’s analysis. Given the Supreme Court’s [greenlighting](#) of blatant racial profiling in immigration enforcement, it stands to reason that the immigrants intended for detention at “Camp 57” will likely be disproportionately Latinx (along with other racialized immigrants of color). “Camp 57” is set to continue Angola’s explicitly anti-Black legacy of racialized abuses and harms, expanding to reach new populations of vulnerable people of color who are deemed disposable by the Trump Administration and its allies. The Trump Administration has never sent a clearer message: it is willing and able to enthusiastically embrace symbols of white supremacy when it is

continued...

expedient for its immigration policy goals.

E. MONTANA

In Montana, [House Bill 278](#) authorizes-but does not require-peace officers to check for immigration status during lawful investigative stop and frisk activity of individual people or vehicles. Montana Governor Greg Gianforte signed it into law in April 2025 and it went into effect in October 2025. A local nonprofit called Valley Neighbors of the Flathead has [sued](#) to stop the law, [arguing](#) it violates Montana's constitution and should be permanently enjoined from taking effect.

F. NORTH CAROLINA

In 2025, a [pair](#) of anti-immigrant bills in North Carolina were initially vetoed by Governor Josh Stein: SB 153 and HB 318. [SB 153](#) included mandated 287(g) programs for various state agencies like the Department of Public Safety, Department of Adult Correction, State Highway Patrol, and State Bureau of Investigation; mandated state agencies to ensure undocumented people did not receive public benefits beyond the extent already prohibited by federal law; waived aspects of sovereign immunity for local jurisdictions that failed to comply with state anti-"sanctuary" provisions; and prohibited University of North Carolina institutions from adopting any "sanctuary" policies or procedures and from refusing to share individual citizenship status information with law enforcement officials.

[HB 318](#) proposed to expand the list of criminal charges that would require local law enforcement to confirm the citizenship status of a charged person to include all felony charges and some misdemeanors; delay start time for required ICE detainer holds such that people are detained an additional 48 hours in local custody; and require jail administrators to notify ICE before releasing someone who was previously held on an ICE detainer. Despite being vetoed by the Governor, the North Carolina General Assembly [overrode](#) his veto and passed HB 318 into law. Notably, the veto was overridden with all Republican lawmakers and just a single Democratic

continued...

lawmaker's vote in support.

G. OKLAHOMA

In the 2025 legislative session in Oklahoma, 20 anti-immigrant bills were [proposed](#), ranging from legislation that would bar any immigrant from owning or renting property in Oklahoma to tracking the immigration status of public school children. Only one successful bill was [signed](#) into law in May 2025: SB 20, which requires “non-domiciled” commercial driver license holders to provide proof of U.S. citizenship, obtain employment authorization, and demonstrate proficiency in English. According to [policy experts](#) in Oklahoma, the bill does not mark a drastic departure from existing commercial driver license policy, “but its anti-immigrant message remains clear.” Oklahoma’s [HB 4156](#) (its Texas SB 4 copycat law attempting to create a state system to enforce immigration law) was preliminarily enjoined in June 2025.

H. TENNESSEE

Introduced in January 2025 and signed into law in May 2025, Tennessee [SB 392](#) creates far-reaching criminal penalties for any individual or organization that harbors a person who is undocumented for financial benefit. The law defines “harbor” as providing shelter—which [advocates](#) say could make it a crime for “a church to offer temporary shelter, a landlord to rent out a room, or a family member to live with a person who is undocumented [...] the law is written so broadly that it could be used to criminalize providing shelter to those who were once undocumented but subsequently obtained protected status like asylum or protection under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).” In June 2025, a coalition of church groups and immigration advocacy organizations filed [suit](#) challenging the law, arguing that it is both unconstitutional and too vague to encourage compliance. Preliminary [hearings](#) in the lawsuit began in September 2025, during which the Tennessee Attorney General refused to protect church groups and charities from prosecution under the law while the litigation proceeds, potentially signaling that Tennessee intends for the law to

continued...

have the broadest possible applicability.

In January 2025, SB 6002 passed both legislative chambers. SB 6002 is a sweeping [omnibus](#) immigration law, which creates a new division within the state's Department of Safety to coordinate immigration enforcement with the federal government; creates new incentives for local law enforcement participation in 287(g) programs; and creates a designated and specially-marked license for lawful permanent residents and people authorized to be in the country for a specific time period. In June 2025, the ACLU of Tennessee [challenged](#) one provision in the law that would designate local officials who vote for or enact "sanctuary city" policies as Class E [felons](#)-with punishment of up to six years in prison and fines. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of seven members of Nashville's Metro Council, who claim the law violates the First Amendment, and note that "sanctuary" jurisdictions have been illegal in Tennessee since 2019.

I. VIRGINIA

In August 2025, members of the Virginia National Guard began "supporting" immigration enforcement activity in coordination with ICE, a move lauded by Governor Glenn Youngkin. Although a statement from a National Guard spokesman [noted](#) that support would be mainly administrative and logistical and "will not include making arrests," authorization from the DOD allows Virginia National Guard troops to have direct contact with people in ICE custody. As of September 2025, Virginia National Guard troops have been [deployed](#) to ICE field offices in Virginia, and may remain there until November 2025. Per the Virginia National Guard, troops may support ICE completing tasks including, but not limited to, "answering phones, data entry, appointment scheduling, biometric collection, performing basic vehicle maintenance and tracking fleet expenses and utilization."

Human rights and legal [organizers](#) across the state, including at the Tahirih Justice Center in Virginia have decried the move, [stating](#), "[...] The deployment of the Guard

continued...

to support efforts to apprehend and detain Virginians is particularly harmful to immigrant crime victims including survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking, who are already expressing high levels of fear and anxiety about engaging with law enforcement. By pulling the Guard away from their core duties, it leaves all Virginians at increased risk.”

IV. RESISTANCE NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Despite regressive state legislation and developments at the state and federal level, community organizers and activists find new ways to resist authoritarianism. Below are some collected perspectives of organizers in affected states, sharing their determination to protect communities and enhance safety for everyone, regardless of immigration status.

A. OKLAHOMA

In Oklahoma, [Dream Action Oklahoma](#)—along with community partners and grassroots organizations—has been working to create rapid response networks across the state. These networks track, respond to, and highlight the impact of increased immigration enforcement in Oklahoma. In spite of a court injunction preventing Oklahoma’s state deportation law from taking effect, Oklahoma launched [Operation Guardian](#) (an expansive partnership between ICE and state law enforcement, including a 287(g) agreement)). Anti-immigrant narratives and the rollout of Operation Guardian have increased criminalization of immigrants throughout the state. In response to these state developments, Dream Action Oklahoma trains allies and community members in Know Your Rights information, how to monitor ICE activity, and how to take action to stop state and federal collaboration that further erodes trust and safety for all Oklahomans.

“For immigrants and communities of color in Oklahoma pushing back on anti-immigrant policies and fighting against law enforcement collaboration is a matter

continued...

of survival,” states **CJ Garcia, Community Organizer at Dream Action Oklahoma.**

“Oklahoma ranks fourth in the nation in terms of incarceration rates, which alone puts communities of color at risk of being targeted and racially profiled at an even higher rate when law enforcement and ICE become one. For Dream Action Oklahoma, our work is far from done, but we see the impact and the growth of collective organizing to care for communities and show up for everyone who calls Oklahoma home.”

B. TEXAS

Despite the state’s mandate under SB 8 requiring most Texas counties to enter into 287(g) agreements, communities across the state are fighting back. [Texans United for Justice \(“TUFJ”\)](#)—a coalition of grassroots and advocacy organizations—leads efforts to educate and mobilize residents on the true costs and harms of 287(g) programs, from racial profiling to wasted taxpayer dollars. Through digital outreach, town halls, and community meetings, TUFJ is building public rejection of these agreements to pressure sheriffs to limit participation and dedicate the fewest possible resources while still complying with state law. The coalition has helped hold the line in major urban counties and is now expanding work to smaller border and interior counties, ensuring Texans have the knowledge and tools to demand safety, accountability, and justice from their local governments. The coalition has also developed a [centralized database](#) where community members can report enforcement actions under both Operation Lone Star and SB 8. This tool helps advocates track patterns of abuse and identify counties that violate civil rights.

“In Texas, we are seeing the manifestation of a decade-long push by our state and federal government to turn every element of our society into an anti-immigrant weapon,” says **Roberto A. Lopez, Senior Advocacy Manager at Texas Civil Rights Project.** “From the overpolicing of immigrant communities by all levels of law enforcement, to the expansion of mass surveillance technology, to gutting immigrant access to public services like healthcare and higher education, organizers are racing to understand these changes, provide mutual aid, and community defense. As Operation Lone



continued...

Star bleeds into literally every corner of our state, we must share our experiences and learning from the last four years with new organizers across the State who are experiencing the overwhelming effort from state and federal leaders to deport millions each year.”

Are you a California Community College (CCC) or a California State University (CSU) student? If so, you qualify for **FREE** immigration legal services!

FIND OUT MORE

CCC: findyourally.com

CSU: findyourally.com/csu

Discover more community explainers, toolkits, & alerts about immigration law.

FOLLOW US

