



National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) Statement
House Homeland Security Committee Democratic Forum
Unmasking the Truth: How Trump's Immigration Raids Target U.S. Citizens and Terrorize
Communities
November 19, 2025

Thank you, Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson and members of this Committee for holding this important democratic issues forum. My name is Jesse Franzblau, and I serve as Associate Director of Policy for the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC).

For over four decades, NIJC has dedicated itself to ensuring human rights protections and access to justice for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Headquartered in Chicago, IL, NIJC provides direct legal services to approximately 11,000 low-income individuals each year and advocates on behalf of our immigrant communities through federal advocacy, impact litigation, and public education. NIJC serves people throughout the country, with a focus on the Midwest region, facing rampant rights violations by federal immigration enforcement agents and inhumane conditions in immigration detention.

Today, I would like to address critical issues facing our communities in the Chicago area and across the country, notably: 1) the egregious rights abuses by federal immigration agents who are carrying out sweeping arrest operations, and 2) the discriminatory practices that are occurring along racial and ethnic lines. These issues impact U.S. citizens and non-citizens alike, and represent a dramatic overreach of executive authority and serious threat to democratic institutions.

1) Rampant abuses carried out with impunity

While Trump administration officials often deny that U.S. citizens are being detained during their ongoing immigration arrest operations, mounting evidence contradicts those claims. There are countless reports of U.S. citizens arrested or temporarily detained by immigration agents. The administration fails to report reliably on how many citizens are held by immigration agents, but a ProPublica [investigation](#) found more than 170 cases this year where citizens were detained at raids and protests. Native Americans have even been [impacted](#) by the raids.

New federal disclosures through the ongoing [Castañon Nava settlement agreement](#) illustrate how the assault on immigrant communities impacts U.S. citizens and non-citizens alike. In this case, Judge Jeffrey Cummings of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois has [ordered](#) the Trump administration to release from ICE detention centers potentially hundreds of people who are believed to have been arrested without warrants or probable cause. The judge

ordered 13 people released, and identified 614 people out of a subset of 1,852 people arrested between June 12 and October 7 for potential release. ICE identified 55 people as “public safety risks” but counsel asked for clarification on 39 of those individuals. The government has told the court that approximately 1,100 people who may have been eligible for release under the *Castañon Nava* consent decree have already been deported or accepted voluntary departure in order to avoid prolonged stays in ICE detention. Hundreds of others who were detained in violation of the consent decree in recent months in the Chicago area also are expected to become eligible for release as litigation continues.

Judge Cummings has also [addressed](#) how citizens and noncitizens with legal status who share commonalities now find themselves more likely to be subjected to ICE questioning for sometimes lengthy periods, and, potentially, warrantless arrests during immigration enforcement operations. U.S. citizens are being seized, taken from their jobs, and prevented from working to support themselves and their families. An October 7th [decision](#) discussed the cases of two citizens who were amongst five persons arrested during a September 25, 2025 immigration enforcement operation at a home in a Chicago suburb.

The court’s decisions point to the scope and gravity of the constitutional violations the federal immigration arrest operations have wrought on people in Chicago, both citizens and immigrants alike, as was so graphically perpetrated during the South Shore apartment building raid.

In that operation, on September 25, 2025, roughly three hundred DHS officers and personnel from other law enforcement agencies with support by Black Hawk helicopters conducted an immigration enforcement action at an apartment building in the predominately African-American South Shore neighborhood in Chicago. The building was reportedly targeted because it was alleged to be frequented by members of *Tren de Aragua* (a Venezuelan gang) and their associates. A ProPublica [investigation](#) found little to support the government’s claims regarding the justification for the raids.

According to news accounts, residents and witnesses said that armed federal agents in military fatigues busted down people’s doors in the middle of the night, pulling men, women and children from their apartments, some of them naked. Agents approached or entered nearly every apartment in the five-story building, and U.S. citizens were among those detained for hours. Federal officials declined to release the names of 37 immigrants detained in the raid.

The raid is just one of the examples of how communities throughout the Chicago area have been traumatized by ICE and other federal agents’ chaotic and violent actions in our neighborhoods in recent months, as potentially hundreds of families already have been permanently separated as a result of unlawful arrests and rapid deportations without due process.

2) Racial profiling

Under the Fourth Amendment, federal agents are generally not allowed to stop someone unless they have good reason to suspect that they are breaking laws. Yet a growing number of people, many of them Latinx, have reported being targeted, harassed, and detained by ICE and CBP agents [solely because of their race](#)

A recent Brookings [study](#) on racial profiling points to the September Supreme Court [decision](#) *Noem v. Vasquez-Perdomo*, which lifted an order that had stopped ICE from targeting people based on race, language, and place of work. The Supreme Court decision has allowed ICE to use broad criteria when making stops, including the type of location at which they were found, the type of job they appeared to work, whether they speak Spanish or English with an accent, and their apparent race or ethnicity. The decision is having a marked impact on Latinx Americans, who have long been harmed by racial profiling tied to immigration enforcement. Trump’s “border czar” Thomas Homan [remarked](#) in July about ICE questioning people based on physical appearance in Los Angeles, illustrating how ICE relied on racial profiling and arrested people with a lack of reasonable suspicion, violating the Fourth Amendment and putting everyone at risk.

Ensuring ICE has probable cause to make an arrest is more important than ever in the aftermath of the Supreme Court’s *Vasquez Perdomo* decision. The aforementioned court orders in the *Castañon Nava* settlement agreement are providing tools to hold DHS and ICE accountable. They make clear that DHS and ICE must follow the Constitution and the law. The agency’s practice of stopping, harassing and detaining people, and then afterward finding a justification for the action, is reckless and authoritarian behavior by the federal government. The administration must not be allowed to circumvent constitutional protections, federal law or court orders.

Congress must continue to demand answers and accountability from DHS on the use of racial profiling in immigration enforcement. It is imperative that Congress do everything in its power to end impunity for the ICE and CBP operations ravaging our communities – this means blocking any additional funds through provisions in appropriations law. Congress must conduct vigorous oversight visits and advocate on behalf of people in detention. It is vital for Congress to put an end to the misuse of funds, end the impunity, and work to protect constitutional protections.

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