

NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES - JULY 15, 2020

LATEST STATISTICS

NUMBER OF CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES AMONG ICE STAFF AND DETAINED IMMIGRANTS

By U.S. Immigration And Customs Enforcement – July 15, 2020

As of **July 10, 2020**, the total detained population is: **22,835**¹. There have been **1,175** confirmed cases of COVID-19 among those in ICE custody as of **July 13, 2020**². To date, there have been **13,562** total detainees tested.

Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
Atlanta Field Office			
Charleston County Detention Center	2	0	2
Folkston ICE Processing Center	10	0	10
Irwin County Detention Center	12	0	18
Stewart Detention Center	74	1	109
Boston Field Office			
Bristol County Detention Center	0	0	1
Franklin County House of Corrections	5	0	6
Strafford County Corrections	2	0	2
Wyatt Detention Center	0	0	2
Buffalo Field Office			
Buffalo (Batavia) Service Processing Center	0	0	49
Chicago Field Office			
Lincoln County Detention Center	0	0	1
Pulaski County Detention Center	5	0	50
Dallas Field Office			
Bluebonnet Detention Facility	151	0	286
Johnson County Law Enforcement Center	1	0	1
Moore Detention Center	19	0	19
PrairieLand Detention Facility	13	0	57
Rolling Plains Detention Center	0	0	55
Denver Field Office			
Aurora Contract Detention Facility	10	0	17
Detroit Field Office			
Calhoun County Correctional Center	4	0	7
Morrow County Correctional Facility	0	0	48
Saint Clair County Jail	3	0	10
El Paso Field Office			
El Paso Service Processing Center	25	0	137
Otero County Processing Center	1	0	142

Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
El Paso Field Office Cont'd			
Torrance County Detention Center	31	0	55
Houston Field Office			
Houston Contract Detention Facility	18	0	122
IAH Polk Adult Detention Facility	0	0	16
Joe Corley Detention Center	2	0	43
Montgomery Processing Center (Houston)	6	0	205
Los Angeles Field Office			
Adelanto ICE Processing Center	0	0	14
Miami Field Office			
Broward Transitional Center	13	0	34
Glades County Detention Center	56	1	122
Krome North Service Processing Center	30	0	64
Wakulla County Jail	1	0	1
Newark Field Office			
Elizabeth Detention Center	0	0	18
Essex County Jail	6	0	8
New Orleans Field Office			
Adams County Correctional Center	0	0	35
Alexandria Staging Facility	332	0	90
Catahoula Correctional Center	59	0	111
Etowah County Jail	17	0	18
Jackson Parish Correctional	3	0	3
LaSalle ICE Processing Center - Jena	2	0	17
LaSalle ICE Processing Center - Olla	9	0	15
Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center	1	0	31
Richwood Correctional Center	0	0	65
River Correctional Center	7	0	9
South Louisiana Correctional Center	2	0	2
Winn Correctional Center	12	0	133
New York City Field Office			
Bergen County Jail	0	0	2
Hudson County Jail	5	0	14
Philadelphia Field Office			
Pike County Correctional Facility	0	0	22
York County Prison	0	0	1

Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
Phoenix Field Office			
CCA Florence Correctional Center	3	0	15
Eloy Federal Contract Facility	117	0	251
Florence Detention Center	14	0	46
La Palma Correctional Facility	10	0	102
Salt Lake City Field Office			
Nevada Southern Detention Center	8	0	8
Nye County Jail	26	0	26
Washington County Jail	1	0	1
San Antonio Field Office			
El Valle Detention Facility	3	0	3
Karnes County Residential Center	27	0	38
Port Isabel Detention Center	3	0	85
South Texas ICE Processing Center (Pearsall)	29	0	76
Webb County Detention Center (CCA)	7	0	8
San Diego Field Office			
Imperial Regional Detention Facility	0	0	2
Otay Mesa Detention Center (San Diego CDF)	4	1	168
San Luis Regional Detention Center	2	0	7
San Francisco Field Office			
Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center	1	0	1
Seattle Field Office			
Tacoma ICE Processing Center	2	0	5
St. Paul Field Office			
Polk County Jail	1	0	12
Washington D.C. Field Office			
Caroline Detention Facility	0	0	3
Immigration Centers of America - Farmville	268	0	315
TOTAL	1,175	3	3,471

¹ ICE's FY 2019 Average Daily Population was 50,165.

² "Currently under isolation or monitoring" includes detainees who tested positive for COVID-19 and are currently in ICE custody under isolation or monitoring. This number excludes detainees who previously tested positive for COVID-19 and were either returned to the general population after a discontinuation of medical monitoring/isolation or are no longer in ICE custody.

³ "Detainee deaths" includes those who have died after testing positive for COVID-19 while in custody; COVID-19 may not be the official cause of death.

⁴ "Total confirmed COVID-19 cases" is the cumulative total of detainees who have tested positive for COVID-19 while in ICE custody since testing began in February 2020. Some detainees may no longer be in ICE custody or may have since tested negative.

***Data last reviewed/updated: 07/14/2020

There have been 45 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among ICE employees working in ICE detention facilities. Data updated on 06/18/2020 at 4:55pm.

1 at Adelanto ICE Processing Center (Adelanto, CA)
 15 at Alexandria Staging Facility (Alexandria, LA)
 2 at Aurora Contract Detention Facility (Aurora, CO)
 1 in Bergen County Jail (Hackensack, NJ)
 1 at Butler County Jail (Hamilton, OH)
 1 at El Paso Processing Center (El Paso, TX)
 2 at Elizabeth Contract Detention Facility (Elizabeth, NJ)
 1 at Eloy Detention Center (Eloy, AZ)

1 at Essex County Correctional Facility (Newark, NJ)
 1 at Florence Correctional Center (Florence, AZ)
 2 at Houston Contract Detention Facility (Houston, TX)
 1 at Hudson County Jail (Kearny, NJ)
 2 at La Salle ICE Processing Center (Jena, AL)
 11 at Otay Mesa Detention Center (San Diego, CA)
 2 at Stewart Detention Center (Lumpkin, GA)
 1 at T. Don Hutto Residential Center (Taylor, TX)

There have been 153 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among ICE employees not assigned to detention facilities. Data updated on 06/18/2020 at 4:55pm.

❖ Data Source: <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus>

DETENTION CENTERS NEWS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Immigration Officials Didn't Follow Guidelines On Migrant Children's Health Care, Report Finds

By Michelle Hackman – The Wall Street Journal – July 15, 2020

❖ U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) doesn't consistently follow its own guidelines governing medical care of migrant children in its custody and chose to ignore a recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to give the flu vaccine to children, a new report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found. The report, commissioned by Pennsylvania Democratic Sen. Bob Casey, reviewed CBP's attempts to improve the medical care it provides migrant children—along with the training it gives border agents—following the high-profile deaths of at least five children in its custody beginning in December of 2018. Though CBP policy states migrants shouldn't remain in their custody longer than about three days, the surge at the border last year backed up the entire immigration system, resulting in overcrowding in cramped border detention centers and stays that frequently lasted longer than three days. Infectious diseases, including the flu and the measles, were widespread. The Congressional watchdog found CBP did make progress: It hired more medical personnel at the border, enlisted help from the CDC to improve its procedures and developed more complete health guidelines. Still, the report found CBP applied those guidelines inconsistently. For example, in one survey last November across South Texas, GAO found three of 10 border stations it visited didn't have medical staff present to perform medical assessments. In a different survey conducted in February of border-patrol stations without medical personnel present, 143 of 373 children taken into custody over one week didn't receive basic health checks by border agents. Among those who did, some who indicated to border agents that they had symptoms including a cough weren't then referred for a full medical assessment. The report also found that CBP chose not to follow the CDC's recommendation that migrant children be vaccinated against the flu. CBP officials told GAO that vaccinating children would pose logistical, medical and legal hurdles, and as of April still opposed the idea. The report also found that GAO has inconsistently reported deaths in its custody to Congress and lacks a consistent way to track other serious illnesses or injuries in border facilities, according to the report. The agency promised to overhaul its record-keeping by September and report the information to Congress more consistently. In response to the Congressional watchdog's findings, CBP said that it wasn't aware of the extent to which its guidelines were being inconsistently applied and that it was already working to address the issue.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/immigration-officials-didnt-follow-guidelines-on-migrant-childrens-health-care-report-finds-11594818001>



Families detained at a U.S. Border Patrol Station in McAllen, Texas
 Photo Credit: Office of Inspector General/Department of Homeland Security/Getty Images

‘They Put Us In Here To Let Us Die’: ICE Prison Sees Outbreak Of Coronavirus—And Guard Violence

By Spencer Ackerman – Daily Beast – July 14, 2020

- ❖ A dire situation is unfolding at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) prison in Virginia, where the vast majority of people detained have now tested positive for the coronavirus, and where guards have responded violently to protests at least three times in two weeks. The director of Farmville, a privately run immigration detention center in central Virginia, recently stated in court papers that at least 267 people currently detained there have tested positive for the coronavirus—and the numbers may spike further, with 80 people still awaiting test results. It took until July 2 to test all 366 detainees. Only 19 people tested negative. In addition, 22 employees of the detention center have tested positive. Director Jeffrey Crawford’s court declaration revealed that guards at Farmville used pepper spray on detainees who had refused to assemble for morning attendance on July 1. It is the third acknowledged use of violence on Farmville detainees, who have been protesting their conditions as they watch the coronavirus spread, since June 20. The crisis at Farmville raises questions about the extent of the coronavirus within ICE detention centers, which have become vectors for the pandemic, as well as the candor with which ICE is presenting it to the public. As recently as Monday morning [July 13], ICE listed on its website 102 “confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring” at Farmville, despite Farmville director Crawford reporting 267 cases in a court declaration made on July 9. That makes Farmville by far the ICE facility hardest hit by the coronavirus. The Bluebonnet facility in Texas, per ICE’s website, has 151 current cases.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/ice-prison-sees-outbreak-of-coronavirus-and-guard-violence-they-put-us-in-here-to-let-us-die>

Nearly 1,000 U.S. Immigration Detention Center Employees Test Positive For Coronavirus

By Mica Rosenberg – Reuters – July 13, 2020

- ❖ More than 930 employees of private contractors running U.S. immigration detention centers have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, according to congressional testimony given by company executives on Monday [July 13]. The heads of four companies - CoreCivic, The GEO Group, Management & Training Corp and LaSalle Corrections - that detain immigrants on contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), reported the infections among employees in response to questions from lawmakers. ICE has reported 45 cases of COVID-19 among its direct staff at detention facilities. Most of the employees at the privately run centers, however, work for private contractors and are not included in ICE’s count. Lawmakers have raised concerns about the spread of the virus inside nearly 70 centers across the country. More than 3,000 immigrants in ICE custody have tested positive for COVID-19, although some have recovered or been released. Two detainees have died of the disease. On Monday, a 51-year-old Mexican man who had tested positive for coronavirus died in ICE detention, although the agency said the cause of death was still undetermined. The chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security, Kathleen Rice, a Democrat from New York, said there had been reports among employees of rationing of personal protective equipment, inadequate medical care and delayed testing. CoreCivic said about 554 of its nearly 14,000 employees had tested positive. GEO Group said 167 of its 3,700 employees had come back with positive tests, with 69 recovered and one hospitalized. LaSalle said it had 144 employees with positive COVID-19 tests, out of the company’s some 3,000 employees, and MTC said 73 of its 1,200 employees had tested positive. There are currently nearly 22,580 detainees in ICE custody, a dramatic drop from the more than 50,000 migrants detained on average daily during the 2019 fiscal year. Arrests on the U.S.-Mexico border have declined in recent months and courts have ordered releases, citing coronavirus risks.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-immigration-idUSKCN24E2V3>

Third Immigrant Detained By ICE Dies After Contracting The Coronavirus

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez – CBS News – July 13, 2020

- ❖ A Mexican immigrant died in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody after contracting the coronavirus. This is the third known ICE detainee death linked to the virus. Onoal Perez-Montufa, a 51-year-old immigrant from Mexico, died Sunday [July 12] afternoon at a south Florida hospital, where he had been hospitalized since July 1. Perez-Montufa tested positive for the coronavirus on July 2, according to ICE. Perez-Montufa entered ICE custody last month after serving 12 years of a 20-year prison sentence stemming from a 2008 cocaine conviction. The agency said in a statement Monday [July 13] that Perez-Montufa was subject to "mandatory detention," a provision in immigration law that generally requires the immigration detention of non-citizens, even green card holders, who were convicted of certain crimes. The agency has maintained during the pandemic that detainees in this category are not eligible for release, even if they have medical conditions that place them at increased risk of severe illness or death if they contract the coronavirus. In testimony before Congress on Monday [July 13], the four largest ICE detention contractors — GEO Group, CoreCivic, LaSalle Corrections and the Management & Training Corporation — revealed that more than 880 of its employees have tested positive for the coronavirus so far. At least 45 direct ICE employees at detention facilities have also tested positive, according to the agency’s tally. With Perez-Montufa’s death, 14 immigrants have died in ICE custody during fiscal year 2020, which started in October 2019.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/third-immigrant-dies-in-ice-custody-after-contracting-the-coronavirus/?ftag=CNM-00-10aac3a>

FAMILY SEPARATIONS

The Government's Own Experts Say Separating Immigrant Families During The Coronavirus Pandemic Will Add To Their Mental Trauma

By Hamed Aleaziz – BuzzFeed News – July 14, 2020

- ❖ A group of medical experts hired by the Department of Homeland Security says separating immigrant children from their parents would “exacerbate the physical and mental trauma to detained families who know they are unable to protect themselves from the deadly, rapidly spreading pandemic.” The group of doctors — Scott Allen, Pamela McPherson, and Josiah Rich — are professors and medical and mental health experts for the department’s Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, which inspects the care of those in government custody. They described their opposition to any potential policy that would separate families on Tuesday [July 14] in a letter to Congress that was obtained by BuzzFeed News. The letter comes after immigrant children were ordered released from ICE detention centers across the country, which advocates worry could lead to scenarios in which they could be separated from their parents. “We are writing to you, members of Congress responsible for overseeing DHS, because we have a professional obligation to raise our grave concerns about DHS’s reattempt to separate children from their families in response to a federal court order to release the children when it is within ICE discretion to release the families intact,” the medical experts wrote. “We advocate for the release of immigrant detainees who present no threat to communities to prevent both the harm of family and children separation and the risk of spread and infection of COVID-19.” As of Thursday [July 9], there were 319 immigrants — at least 157 of them children — in custody at the three family detention centers. At the Karnes County Residential Center in Texas, there are 24 current cases of COVID-19 among immigrant families detained there. There have been 35 total cases at the facility. There have been no positive cases at the other two ICE family detention centers. Last week, U.S. government officials told a federal judge that immigrant families should not be released from custody. Attorneys for the administration said the court should deny a motion for a preliminary injunction to promptly release all families in ICE detention. Immigrant advocates said the filing sets up a potential separation of children from their parents in custody as the government looks to comply with a separate order to release the children. Last month, U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee, who oversees a 1997 court settlement known as the Flores agreement that says the government can’t detain children for more than 20 days, ordered the release of immigrant minors at ICE facilities by July 17. Previously, an independent monitor tasked with tracking how children in family detention centers are treated as part of the court agreement said the risk of immigrant minors and families contracting coronavirus inside one of the facilities continued to grow because some staffers failed to wear masks or observe social distancing requirements.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/government-experts-opppose-separating-immigrant-families>

Migrant Mother Given A Choice: Leave Her Newborn In U.S. Or Return To Mexico Together

By Max Rivlin-Nadler – NPR – July 13, 2020

- ❖ Fleeing violence in Mexico, one Honduran family decided to cross into the U.S. illegally last month [June] and turn themselves over to Border Patrol agents in the desert near San Diego. The father and son were immediately returned to the border and told to walk back to Tijuana, but the mother, who was pregnant, was in pain. So Border Patrol agents took her to a nearby hospital, where she gave birth. Two days later, the mother was given a choice: Go back to Mexico with or without her newborn, who is a U.S. citizen by birthright. “That’s not a choice. That’s not a legitimate choice,” said Mitra Ebadollahi, an attorney with the ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties. She said the mother and the baby returned to Mexico. A Border Patrol spokesman said the mother has no “legal right” to be in the United States and that the mother could have simply chosen to turn her newborn son over to child services in California. Immigrant advocates in San Diego say this isn’t the first time the Border Patrol has tried to separate a mother from her newborn. Last December, immigration lawyers say an asylum-seeker was told she’d be sent back to Mexico without her U.S.-citizen child. Her lawyers intervened to stop the separation, and the mother was allowed to pursue her asylum case from inside the U.S. The Honduran family had crossed the Rio Grande in Texas earlier this year and tried to claim asylum in the U.S. Under the “Remain-In-Mexico” program, they were given a March court date and told to wait in Mexico. After they say they were robbed at gunpoint in Monterrey, they moved to Tijuana. The ACLU, along with Jewish Family Service of San Diego, filed a complaint with the Department of Homeland Security’s inspector general on Friday [July 10]. They say the family was denied their legal right to an interview to determine if they were in danger in Mexico. The organizations asked Customs and Border Protection to allow the family to enter the U.S. to continue their asylum claim. The family has since reunited in Tijuana, where they remain in a rented apartment. The mother hasn’t been able to access care in Mexico because local medical professionals are stretched thin by the coronavirus pandemic.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/13/890471896/migrant-mother-given-a-choice-leave-her-newborn-in-u-s-or-return-to-mexico-toget>

DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

Business Leaders Urge Trump To Leave DACA Alone After Court Ruling

By Maggie Haberman – *The New York Times* – July 11, 2020

- ❖ A group of prominent business leaders urged President Trump on Saturday [July 11] to leave in place a program affecting roughly 800,000 young immigrants who are shielded from deportation, saying it would disrupt the economy and impact the battle against the coronavirus. The letter, from members of the Coalition for the American Dream, an alliance of business and industry leaders, comes after the Supreme Court ruled last month that the administration improperly wound down the Obama-era program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, a finding that was made on procedural grounds. The signers of the letter included executives with Amazon, General Motors, Hilton Worldwide, Target, Apple, Google and Facebook, as well as groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and almost every sector of the manufacturing industry. “As large American employers and employer organizations, we strongly urge you to leave the DACA program in place,” members of the group wrote about the program, which applies to people who were brought to the United States as children. “DACA recipients have been critical members of our work force, industries, and communities for years now, and they have abided by the laws and regulations of our country in order to maintain their DACA status.” The letter went on to say that “their work and commitment to our companies, their families and communities are critical to our nation’s strength, especially since there are tens of thousands of DACA recipients working as front line doctors and nurses and in other critical industries fighting Covid-19.” “This is no time to disrupt the economic recovery of our companies and communities, nor time to jeopardize the health and safety of these vulnerable individuals,” the letter said, noting that polls have consistently shown voters don’t want to see DACA recipients deported. “We ask that you leave DACA in place and refrain from taking any additional administrative actions that would negatively impact the DACA program.” On Friday [July 10], in an interview with the Spanish-language network Telemundo, Mr. Trump gave a confusing statement about his plans to write an immigration-related executive order in about four weeks. “DACA is going to be just fine,” Mr. Trump said, adding that he was going to issue a “big executive order. I have the power to do it as president and I’m going to make DACA a part of it.” Then he immediately said, “But, we put it in, and we’ll probably going to then be taking it out.” At another point, he said that it would be a “very big bill” that would call for merit-based immigration and include a DACA provision. He then said there would be a “road to citizenship” in the executive order — which he repeatedly confused with a piece of legislation. Presidents cannot create a pathway to citizenship without congressional action. Almost immediately after Mr. Trump’s interview, a White House spokesman issued a statement that was quite different from what the president said. The statement said that Mr. Trump was working on an executive order to “establish a merit-based immigration system to further protect U.S. workers,” something that the White House has been planning for weeks. The statement made clear it would not relate to DACA or a “road to citizenship.”
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/11/us/politics/business-leaders-urge-trump-to-leave-daca-alone-after-court-ruling.html>

BORDER WALL

Trump Says He Disagreed With Privately Funded Border Wall. The Builder Got \$1.7 Billion In Wall Contracts From His Administration.

By Perla Trevizo and Jeremy Schwartz – *The Texas Tribune and ProPublica* – July 12, 2020

- ❖ President Donald Trump complained via Twitter on Sunday [July 12] that a privately constructed border wall in Texas was a bad idea and poorly done — not mentioning that his administration has awarded the builder a \$1.7 billion contract to build more walls. With the backing of supporters, Tommy Fisher built a 3-mile border fence along the Rio Grande, calling it the “Lamborghini” of fences. But just months after completion of his showcase piece directly on the banks of the river, there are signs of erosion along and under the fence that threatens its stability and could cause it to topple into the river if not fixed, experts told ProPublica and The Texas Tribune. “I disagreed with doing this very small (tiny) section of wall, in a tricky area, by a private group which raised money by ads. It was only done to make me look bad, and perhaps it now doesn’t even work. Should have been built like rest of Wall, 500 plus miles,” Trump tweeted with a typo in reaction to the news organizations’ report about the wall. The administration gave Fisher the billion-dollar contract in May to build additional stretches of the wall in Arizona, despite a lawsuit around the South Texas project and an ongoing audit by the Pentagon’s inspector general of a previous border wall contract that is looking into possible “inappropriate influence.” On Sunday [July 12], the congressman who called for the audit responded to the president’s tweet. “The President isn’t telling the truth again. The Administration has awarded huge contracts to the same company, which is under Federal investigation, that built this fence,” Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., wrote in an email. “His Administration has also entertained outsourcing to private firms to get more mileage done before the election at the expense of proper oversight. There is no reason for construction to continue during a pandemic.”
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/12/texas-border-wall-private/>

DEPORTATIONS DURING COVID-19

Arrests Along Mexico Border Jumped 40% Last Month, Despite Trump Administration's Immigration Crackdown

By Nick Miroff – *The Washington Post* – July 9, 2020

- ❖ The number of migrants detained along the Mexico border jumped 40 percent in June, defying a Trump administration emergency crackdown that has cited the coronavirus pandemic to swiftly “expel” those who cross illegally, according to enforcement statistics released Thursday [July 9] by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). U.S. authorities made 32,512 arrests and detentions along the Mexico border in June, up from 23,142 in May. The June total was nearly double the number of detentions recorded in April, after the administration suspended normal immigration proceedings to quickly process most migrants and return them to Mexico in a matter of hours. CBP figures show the vast majority of those detained in June — 89 percent — were promptly turned back to Mexico using the rapid-expulsion system that is facing a legal challenge from rights groups and immigrant advocates. Last month's arrest totals, while higher than May's, were about one-third of the 104,311 detentions CBP tallied during the same period a year ago, near the peak of the Central American migration crisis. In a statement, CBP acting commissioner Mark Morgan said the higher arrest numbers in June were a justification for continued construction of Trump's \$15 billion border wall project.
- ❖ News Article Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/immigration-border-arrests-surge/2020/07/09/6a1c85a6-c1f9-11ea-864a-0dd31b9d6917_story.html

How ICE Exported The Coronavirus

By Emily Kassie and Barbara Marcolini – *The Marshall Project* – July 10, 2020

- ❖ Admild, an undocumented immigrant from Haiti, was feeling sick as he approached the deportation plane that was going to take him back to the country he had fled in fear. Two weeks before that day in May, while being held at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility in Louisiana, he had tested positive for the coronavirus — and he was still showing symptoms. He disclosed his condition to an ICE official at the airport, who sent him to a nurse. “She just gave me Tylenol,” said Admild, who feared reprisals if his last name was published. Not long after, he was back on the plane before landing in Port-au-Prince, one of more than 40,000 immigrants deported from the United States since March, according to ICE records. Even as lockdowns and other measures have been taken around the world to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, ICE has continued to detain people, move them from state to state and deport them. An investigation by *The New York Times* in collaboration with *The Marshall Project* reveals how unsafe conditions and scattershot testing helped turn ICE into a domestic and global spreader of the virus — and how pressure from the administration led countries to take in sick deportees. So far, ICE has confirmed at least 3,000 coronavirus-positive detainees in its detention centers, though testing has been limited. We tracked over 750 domestic ICE flights since March, carrying thousands of detainees to different centers, including some who said they were sick. Kanate, a refugee from Kyrgyzstan, was moved from the Pike County Correctional Facility in Pennsylvania to the Prairieland Detention Facility in Texas despite showing Covid-19 symptoms. He was confirmed to have the virus just a few days later. We also tracked over 200 deportation flights carrying migrants, some of them ill with coronavirus, to other countries from March through June. Under pressure from the administration and with promises of humanitarian aid, some countries have fully cooperated with deportations. El Salvador and Honduras have accepted more than 6,000 deportees since March. In April, President Trump praised the presidents of both countries for their cooperation and said he would send ventilators to help treat the sickest of their coronavirus patients. So far, the governments of 11 countries have confirmed that deportees returned home with Covid-19. When asked about the agency's role in spreading the virus by moving and deporting sick detainees, ICE said it took precautions and followed guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As of last week, ICE said that it was still able to test only a sampling of immigrants before sending them home. Yet deportation flights continue. In collaboration with the *New York Times*, the *Marshall Project* produced an informative video on this issue. The video can be viewed on the link below.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/07/10/how-ice-exported-the-coronavirus>



A U.S. Border Patrol agent uses personal protective equipment as she takes fingerprints of an individual encountered near Sasabe, Ariz. on March 22, 2020. Photo Credit: U.S. Customs and Border Protection/ Jerry Glaser

COURT RULINGS/HEARINGS DURING COVID-19

Judge Delays Ruling On ICE Detention, Meaning Migrant Parents And Kids Could Be Separated Friday

By Jacob Soboroff and Julia Ainsley – NBC News – July 13, 2020

- ❖ A federal judge said Monday [July 13] he will not rule until the middle of next week on whether migrant parents detained by ICE in family detention centers should be released, meaning 335 children and parents now held there could begin to be separated from each other on Friday [July 17]. The decision by Judge James Boasberg of the U.S. District Court for D.C. would come after the July 17 deadline imposed by a federal judge in California [Judge Dolly Gee] for all children to be released from ICE's three family detention centers to mitigate their exposure to COVID-19. That means it's possible that the children held in the ICE family residential centers could begin being released on Friday [July 17] and thus separated from their detained parents. One potential remedy now being negotiated by the two parties in the California case would present parents with the choice of remaining in custody with their children instead of allowing their kids to be released and therefore separated from them. This option has not been finalized, so may not become a possibility before the Friday [July 17] deadline. Previously, when the option of release and separation was presented in May, migrant parents have declined to separate from their children. But Shalyn Fluharty, director of the Dilley Pro Bono Project, a group representing migrant parents at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas, said due to the rise of COVID-19 in ICE facilities some parents could now choose to separate. "We have parents who want to be separated because they think their kids will die otherwise," Fluharty told NBC News after Boasberg declined to make a ruling at Monday's [July 13] hearing on the issue.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/judge-delays-ruling-ice-detention-meaning-migrant-parents-kids-could-n1233685>

LAWSUITS

Major Lawsuit Filed To Save Families From Trump H-1B Visa Ban

By Stuart Anderson – Forbes – July 15, 2020

- ❖ A new lawsuit hopes to save H-1B visa holders [visas for high-skilled laborers] and their spouses and children [holding H-4 visas] who the administration will not grant visas or allow to enter the United States. Filed on behalf of 174 Indian nationals, including 7 minor children, the legal action, the first to challenge the recent presidential proclamation, asks a court to compel the State Department "to issue decisions on the plaintiffs pending requests for H-1B and H-4 visas," to enjoin the Department of Homeland Security from refusing entry to the United States" and to declare unlawful the proclamation's "restriction on issuing new H-1B or H-4 visas or admitting new H-1B or H-4 visa holders."
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2020/07/15/major-lawsuit-filed-to-save-families-from-trump-h-1b-visa-ban/#21888bc1287f>

Lawsuit Filed Against Trump Administration Related To MPP

By Erin Sheridan – The Brownsville Herald – July 13, 2020

- ❖ A lawsuit filed in Brownsville against the administration this week alleges that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) sent a woman and two children back to Mexico under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP, 'Remain in Mexico' program) in violation of federal immigration law. Filed by W.T., a resident of Houston, the suit alleged that his partner and two minor children were apprehended in the United States after crossing without documents and were placed in MPP as opposed to being classified as "Entry Without Inspection", which should have allowed them to remain in the U.S. for the duration of their asylum proceedings. E.A. – the man's spouse – and the couple's two boys, fled Honduras after suffering persecution for her involvement in La Mesa Nacional, an environmental group that worked to protest industry and government projects since 2010, according to the lawsuit. "[E.A.] became the President of the local chapter of her group in 2018. It was at this time she and her family were harassed, threatened with death, and physically harmed. On one occasion, [her son] was kidnapped by military officials and held in an abandoned house. These officials tied [the child] up and even burned him. When [E.A.] was led to his location, she was detained as well," the document stated. "They tied her up, put a gun in her mouth, and beat her over the head to the point where she lost consciousness," wrote her attorney. The woman and children left Honduras in October 2019 and arrived in the United States in early November of last year. W.T. left one month prior, in September 2019, applied for asylum, and was allowed to enter the United States, the lawsuit stated. When E.A. and the two boys were apprehended and expressed fear of return to both Honduras and Mexico, they were returned to Matamoros. E.A. allegedly told U.S. immigration officials she was "terrified of going to Matamoros because of the high levels of crimes there", and according to the lawsuit, she and her children were served with notices to appear and told to wait for their court dates before officials sent them back across anyway. In Matamoros, the attorney alleged the family has experienced "deplorable" living conditions inside a shelter that houses approximately 150 adults and children.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.brownsvilleherald.com/2020/07/13/lawsuit-filed-trump-administration-related-mpp/>

DEVELOPING STORIES

The U.S. Military Will Stay On The U.S.-Mexico Border, Even With Migration Falling

By Alex Ward and Nicole Narea – VOX – June 25, 2020

- ❖ The Pentagon will officially keep as many as 4,000 troops at the U.S.-Mexico border in October — ensuring President Donald Trump’s military deployment continues throughout the election season despite no signs of an actual crisis. In a Thursday [June 25] statement, Army Lt. Col. Chris Mitchell, a Defense Department spokesperson, said Defense Secretary Mark Esper approved the Department of Homeland Security’s request for assistance at the border. Most military backup will come from the National Guard, he noted, which will help monitor the frontier, provide logistics, and offer transport to Border Patrol personnel. Troops can’t engage in law enforcement activities. In a follow-up comment to Vox as to why such a decision was made months in advance, Mitchell said, “The current mission is set to expire at the end of September. This is just an extension of the mission through the next fiscal year.” The new authorized number of troops would actually be a decrease from the 5,500 military personnel currently at the border. In October 2018, President Donald Trump sent thousands of U.S. troops to the border to stop a so-called “caravan” of migrants from Central America seeking asylum in America. At the time, Pentagon leadership and other administration officials said such a support mission would be temporary and disband when troops were no longer needed. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) arrested about 23,000 migrants in May, a decrease from 114,000 in the same month in 2019. While Central American families previously accounted for the majority of those arrested, single adult males are now coming in larger numbers. The border remains closed to nonessential travel through mid-July, and that closure could be extended until officials decide that immigration no longer poses a public health risk to Americans. Countries that have produced the largest number of asylum seekers — including Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador — have also closed their borders and implemented restrictions even on domestic travel, making movement difficult. Smugglers who help migrants cross the border have also largely ceased operations for now. Immigration officials have also implemented an expulsion order to swiftly turn away migrants at the border, including unaccompanied children, though it’s currently facing a legal challenge brought by the American Civil Liberties Union. Migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras are processed in the field rather than inside U.S. Border Patrol stations, and, without so much as a medical exam, are sent back to Mexico in an average of 96 minutes, the Texas Tribune reported. Some 43,000 migrants have been sent back to Mexico under the new system, according to CBP.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.vox.com/2020/6/25/21303370/us-mexico-border-military-2020-immigration-coronavirus>

ICE Offering "Citizens Academy" Course, With Training On How To Arrest Immigrants

By Chantal Da Silva – NewsWeek – July 9, 2020

- ❖ The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency is set to launch a six-week "Citizens Academy" course on immigration enforcement, which will include training for citizens on how to arrest undocumented immigrants. A letter published online by The St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA) appears to show ICE Chicago Field Office Director Robert Guadian inviting shareholders to participate in the course, which includes six days of training over a six-week period starting in September. "You have been identified as a valued member of the community who may have interest in participating in the inaugural class of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Chicago Citizens Academy," the letter states. Noting that the program is "the first of its kind," Guadian states that the program will "serve as a pilot for nationwide implementation." During the training, stakeholders would receive training on a number of "facets and responsibilities of ICE/ERO operations," he says. Included in the course would be training in "defensive tactics, firearms familiarization and targeted arrests." The training would be "scenario-based," he states, adding that exercises would be "conducted in a safe and positive environment." In an official statement on the program, ICE further said: "The Citizen's Academy is an opportunity for the community to get a transparent, insider's view of ICE's immigration enforcement operations." "ICE is inviting interested participants from a variety of stakeholder backgrounds including: Community groups, state/local elected leaders, Congressional staff, consular officials and business and religious leaders," the agency said. While Guadian's letter did not mention these aspects of the academy's curriculum, the ICE statement said it would "include, but is not limited to, classroom instruction, visiting an immigration detention center, learning more about the health care ICE provides to those in its custody, and examining ICE's role in an immigration case from start to finish." According to Guadian's letter, the training would be held every Tuesday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at ICE's Chicago Field Office starting on September 15. The training sessions would culminate on October 20. Following completion of the training session, a graduation ceremony is expected to be held on Friday, October 23, with graduates being awarded a certificate and a commemorative coin.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/ice-launching-citizens-academy-course-how-agency-arrests-immigrants-1516656>

Ban On New Visas Will Hurt Texas Universities, Experts Say

By Reese Oxner – *Texas Tribune* – July 12, 2020

❖ The administration's suspension of issuing new H-1B visas for specialized roles — such as professors, researchers and computer programmers — is likely to hurt Texas universities, professors, experts and students say. And, some say, the suspension likely won't preserve jobs for U.S. workers as unemployment hovers at devastating levels during the coronavirus pandemic. President Donald Trump signed an executive order on June 22 that suspends the issuance of several visas designated for foreign workers until the end of the year. These visas include H-1B visas for high-skilled laborers and J-1 cultural and educational exchange visas, among others. UT-Austin had 1,220 international students using either H-1B or J-1 visas in 2019, according to the Institute of International Education. Texas A&M University had the most of any Texas college with 1,300. And when it comes to H-1B approvals across all industries, the Dallas-Fort Worth area had the nation's second highest number from 2010 to 2016, College Station-Bryan area ranked fifth, according to Pew Research data. There were 2,477 H-1B visas granted or renewed at Texas educational institutions in 2019, which includes both public and higher education institutions, according to state data. Because the visas are valid for three years and renewable for three more, the number of active visas in Texas is higher.

News Article Source: <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/12/h-1b-j-1-visa-suspensions-texas-universities-students/>

Immigration Courts Reopen Despite Rising Coronavirus Cases

By Regina Garcia Cano and Julie Watson – *Associated Press* – July 13, 2020

❖ Three immigration courts reopened Monday [July 13] as the government extended its push to fully restart the clogged system despite rising coronavirus cases in states where many of the small courtrooms are located. In Baltimore, people with hearings to reach final decisions were allowed to enter the federal building housing the immigration court only if they wore masks. Benches in a courtroom and seats in a waiting area were blocked off with tape, and social distancing signs were placed on the floor and elevators. But scheduling hearings, which can include dozens of people in a single courtroom, did not take place Monday [July 13]. Courts in Newark and Detroit also were scheduled to reopen Monday [July 13]. The reopenings extend a haphazard but unmistakable march to business as usual that has outraged judges and lawyers who say the pandemic poses unacceptable risk of spreading disease. The Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review started reopening courts over the past month to non-detained immigrants, first in Honolulu on June 15 and over the next three weeks in Boston; Buffalo, New York; Hartford, Connecticut; Las Vegas; New Orleans; Chicago; Cleveland; and Philadelphia. Dallas reopened June 29 but, five days later, the agency announced on Twitter that it was closing until July 17 and gave no explanation. Texas has been reporting a record number of coronavirus cases, and its governor has warned the state may have to return to a lockdown to get things under control. San Diego, which also has seen a surge in coronavirus cases, was scheduled to reopen court on July 6 but moved it back two weeks — again without explanation. Hearings for non-detained immigrants were suspended in March because of the public health crisis, though courts in detention centers have continued to operate on a limited basis. The court system's backlog of 1.2 million cases becomes more crushing as long as courts are closed. The Justice Department said Monday [July 13] that any court whose reopening date hasn't been announced will be closed through July.

❖ News Article Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/immigration-courts-reopen-rising-coronavirus-cases-71761373>

Sen. Merkley Calls For ICE "Citizens Academy" To Be Defunded

By Chantal Da Silva – *NewsWeek* – July 14, 2020

❖ Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) is calling on fellow Congress members to demand that a new "Citizens Academy" focusing on the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) unit be defunded. Speaking with Newsweek on Monday [July 13], Merkley said he feared that the Citizens Academy pilot program set to launch in Chicago in September could "encourage profiling and vigilante operations and extenuate the divisions that we have in America." "The last thing we need is to increase the...divisiveness, the racial prejudice and the profiling that's already a big challenge we're facing as a nation," he said. Plans for the new program came to light after a letter signed by ICE Chicago Field Office Director Robert Guadian inviting stakeholders to participate in the program was published online. Included in the program's training, he said, would be "scenario-based training and exercises [on] defensive tactics, firearms familiarization and targeted arrests." In the midst of widespread protests around racial injustice and police brutality, Merkley said a course focused on ICE's deportation unit with training on defensive tactics, arrests and firearm use is "more than tone-deaf." "It just sounds like it's trying to pour gasoline on the fire of racial division and profiling. They should cancel this program," he said. Congress members, he asserted, should also be doing what they can to see the program brought to an end.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/sen-merkley-calls-ice-citizens-academy-defunded-1517594>

Trump Administration Drops Restrictions On Online-Only Instruction For Foreign Students

By Priscilla Alvarez – CNN – July 14, 2020

❖ The administration has rescinded its policy that would bar international students who only take online courses from staying in the U.S., a federal judge announced Tuesday [July 14] in Boston. The decision comes a little over a week after Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced that students at schools offering only online courses due to the coronavirus pandemic would need to either leave the U.S. or transfer schools. According to U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs, the administration will return to the policy that was in effect in March, which provided more flexibility for students enrolled in schools that switched to all-online courses because of the pandemic. For now, though, the move to drop the policy is a reprieve for more than 1 million international students in the U.S. In the last week, students had expressed frustration and concern over their next steps, as universities and colleges announced decisions to move all courses online. MIT President L. Rafael Reif celebrated the government's decision in a statement Tuesday [July 14]. "This case also made abundantly clear that real lives are at stake in these matters, with the potential for real harm," he said. "We need to approach policy making, especially now, with more humanity, more decency -- not less." Visa requirements for students have always been strict and coming to the U.S. to take online-only courses has been prohibited. ICE maintained that prohibition in its July 6 guidance, while providing some flexibility for hybrid models, meaning a mix of online and in-person classes. The agency suggested that students currently enrolled in the U.S. consider other options, like transferring to schools with in-person instruction. "If a school isn't going to open or if they're going to be 100% online, then we wouldn't expect people to be here for that," acting Homeland Security Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli told CNN's Brianna Keilar last week.

❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/14/politics/immigration-harvard-visa-policy-online-only/index.html>



CBP announces 65 miles of new border wall construction in Rio Grande Valley Sector.

Photo Credit: U.S. Customs and Border Patrol