

NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES - OCTOBER 8, 2020

LATEST STATISTICS

Number Of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases Among ICE Staff And Detained Immigrants

By U.S. Immigration And Customs Enforcement – October 6, 2020

As of **October 2, 2020**, the total detained population is: **19,742**¹. There have been **677** confirmed cases of COVID-19 among those in ICE custody as of **October 4, 2020**². To date, there have been **45,519** total detainees tested.

COVID-19 ICE Detainee Statistics by Facility			
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	0	0	2
Columbia Regional Care Center	0	0	1
Folkston ICE Processing Center	10	0	69
Irwin County Detention Center	10	0	44
Robert A. Deyton Detention Center	1	0	2
Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center	0	0	1
Stewart Detention Center	23	3	360
Baltimore Field Office			
Worcester County Jail	0	0	1
Boston Field Office			
Bristol County Detention Center	0	0	1
Franklin County House of Corrections	0	0	7
Strafford County Corrections	0	0	2
Wyatt Detention Center	0	0	2
Buffalo Field Office			
Buffalo (Batavia) Service Processing Center	0	0	49
Chicago Field Office			
Chase County Detention Facility	3	0	60
Lincoln County Detention Center	0	0	1
McHenry County Adult Correctional Facility	0	0	5
Montgomery County Jail	1	0	1
Pulaski County Detention Center	8	0	78
Dallas Field Office			
Bluebonnet Detention Facility	0	0	300
Eden Detention Center	49	0	54
Johnson County Law Enforcement Center	1	0	1
Kay County Detention Center	0	0	1
Moore Detention Center	0	0	20
Prairieland Detention Facility	9	0	94

COVID-19 ICE Detainee Statistics by Facility			
Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
Dallas Field Office Cont'd			
Rolling Plains Detention Center	1	0	56
Denver Field Office			
Aurora Contract Detention Facility	37	0	73
Detroit Field Office			
Calhoun County Correctional Center	2	0	16
Geauga County Jail	1	0	1
Morrow County Correctional Facility	0	0	48
Saint Clair County Jail	0	0	11
El Paso Field Office			
Cibola County Correctional Center	0	0	1
El Paso Service Processing Center	23	0	222
Otero County Processing Center	1	0	152
Torrance County Detention Center	0	0	55
Houston Field Office			
Coastal Bend Detention Center	1	0	12
Houston Contract Detention Facility	3	0	146
IAH Polk Adult Detention Facility	6	0	27
Joe Corley Detention Center	0	1	50
Montgomery Processing Center (Houston)	5	0	215
Los Angeles Field Office			
Adelanto ICE Processing Center	105	0	122
Miami Field Office			
Baker County Detention Center	0	0	4
Broward Transitional Center	5	0	149
Glades County Detention Center	5	1	173
Krome North Service Processing Center	3	0	188
Larkin Behavioral Health Center	0	0	2
San Juan Staging Facility	0	0	1
Wakulla County Jail	4	0	35
Newark Field Office			
Elizabeth Detention Center	0	0	18
Essex County Jail	0	0	8
New Orleans Field Office			
Adams County Correctional Center	29	0	93
Alexandria Staging Facility	18	0	154

COVID-19 ICE Detainee Statistics by Facility			
Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
New Orleans Field Office Cont'd			
Allen Parish Detention Center	0	0	10
Catahoula Correctional Center	2	0	119
Etowah County Jail	1	0	22
Jackson Parish Correctional	54	0	106
LaSalle ICE Processing Center - Jena	8	0	40
LaSalle ICE Processing Center - Olla	0	0	25
Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center	0	0	65
Richwood Correctional Center	42	0	116
River Correctional Center	26	0	39
South Louisiana Correctional Center	0	0	3
Winn Correctional Center	24	1	222
New York City Field Office			
Bergen County Jail	0	0	5
Hudson County Jail	0	0	14
Philadelphia Field Office			
Cambria County Prison	7	0	7
Pike County Correctional Facility	0	0	22
York County Prison	21	0	98
Phoenix Field Office			
CCA Florence Correctional Center	8	0	27
Eloy Federal Contract Facility	1	0	252
Florence Detention Center	0	0	66
La Palma Correctional Facility	26	0	400
Salt Lake City Field Office			
Cache County Jail	12	0	15
Henderson Detention Center	11	0	20
Nevada Southern Detention Center	4	0	11
Nye County Jail	0	0	37
Washington County Jail	1	0	3
San Antonio Field Office			
El Valle Detention Facility	22	0	57
Karnes County Family Residential Center	0	0	81
Laredo Processing Center	5	0	6
LaSalle County Regional Detention Center	1	0	1
Limestone County Detention Center	1	0	55

COVID-19 ICE Detainee Statistics by Facility			
Custody/AOR/Facility	Confirmed cases currently under isolation or monitoring	Detainee deaths ³	Total confirmed COVID-19 cases ⁴
San Antonio Field Office Cont'd			
Port Isabel Detention Center	1	0	151
Rio Grande Detention Center	2	0	162
South Texas Family Residential Center (Dilley)	0	0	4
South Texas ICE Processing Center (Pearsall)	15	0	195
Webb County Detention Center (CCA)	1	0	85
San Diego Field Office			
Imperial Regional Detention Facility	0	0	3
Otay Mesa Detention Center (San Diego CDF)	0	1	169
San Luis Regional Detention Center	0	0	11
San Francisco Field Office			
Golden State Annex Facility	2	0	2
Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center	2	0	59
Seattle Field Office			
Tacoma ICE Processing Center	0	0	15
St. Paul Field Office			
Douglas County Corrections	0	0	1
Freeborn County Adult Detention Center	0	0	4
Linn County Jail	0	0	2
Phelps County Jail	0	0	2
Polk County Jail	1	0	13
Washington D.C. Field Office			
Caroline Detention Facility	12	0	38
Immigration Centers of America - Farmville	0	1	339
TOTAL	677	8	6,387

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.

There have been 45 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among ICE employees working in ICE detention facilities.

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

LATEST NEWS

Justice Officials Drove Family Separation Policy, Draft Watchdog Report Says

By Julia Ainsley, Jacob Soboroff and Phil Helsel – NBC News – October 7, 2020

- ❖ Top former Justice Department officials, including U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and deputy Rod Rosenstein, helped drive an administration policy that resulted in the separation of children from their parents, a draft inspector general report shows. The "zero tolerance" policy ultimately separated nearly 3,000 children from their parents for crossing the border illegally, which is a misdemeanor at the first offense. Sessions announced the policy in April 2018, saying that every immigrant who crossed the U.S. border illegally would be prosecuted, including parents with young children. It resulted in children being separated from their parents and generated a huge public outcry. Five U.S. prosecutors along the Mexican border in May 2018 pushed Sessions and Rosenstein to clarify the order with an age minimum, according to a draft report by Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz. "We need to take away children," Sessions told the prosecutors in a conference call, according to participants' notes, the Times reported. One participant added in shorthand: "If care about kids, don't bring them in. Won't give amnesty to people with kids," the report said. Rosenstein, in a second call about a week later, told the five prosecutors that it did not matter how young the children were and that government lawyers should not have declined to prosecute two cases based on the fact the children were very young. John Bash, the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Texas, wrote to his staff immediately after the call that "those two cases should not have been declined," referring to cases in his district that had been declined the day prior because the defendants had very young children, the report said. Rosenstein "instructed that, per the A.G.'s policy, should NOT be categorically declining immigration prosecutions of adults in family units because of the age of a child," according to the report. Horowitz's draft report says that top Justice Department officials were "a driving force" of the family separation policy. The report says that Sessions and others knew that the policy would result in family separations, and they wanted them because they believed that would deter illegal immigration, Horowitz reportedly wrote. The Department of Homeland Security, led then by Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, has taken much of the blame until now for the policy. But the report shows how officials at the Justice Department pushed the policy in meetings and directed its prosecutors to prosecute all parents, regardless of how young their children were. The draft report also had details on a 2017 policy in El Paso known as the "pilot program" for zero tolerance. It has previously been revealed that the Trump administration separated children from their parents before the "zero tolerance" policy was announced. Horowitz's draft report says that in that program, one government lawyer wrote with alarm to superiors: "We have now heard of us taking breastfeeding defendant moms away from their infants," and added, "I did not believe this until I looked at the duty log." Sessions and Rosenstein have since left the administration.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/justice-department-officials-drove-family-separation-policy-watchdog-report-says-n1242375>



A shelter for young children in Brownsville, Texas, in July 2018.

Photo Credit: Ilana Panich-Linsman/New York Times

ICE Arrested More Than 100 Immigrants In California Weeks Before The Presidential Election

By Hamed Aleaziz – BuzzFeed News – October 6, 2020

- ❖ Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials arrested more than 100 immigrants across California in an operation last week [Sept. 28 thru Oct. 3], the latest effort by the agency to target the state and its policies that reduce the cooperation between local police and federal agents when it comes to immigration enforcement. ICE's acting leader, Tony Pham, and Chad Wolf, the acting Department of Homeland Security secretary, plan to slam local officials for so-called "sanctuary" policies, in which local officials refuse to hold immigrants in their custody who are wanted by ICE for longer than required by local laws or inform ICE of when the immigrants will be released from custody. While ICE operations on the street tend to command attention, the agency prefers to focus deportation efforts on local jails, where officers can pick up inmates without being forced to use more resources to make arrests in the field. In an advisory released to the media on Tuesday [October 6] evening, DHS officials said the press conference would "announce the results of recent California-based enforcement actions led by ICE to target at-large aliens subject to removal who were arrested or convicted for crimes, but were released by state or local law enforcement agencies, despite having active immigration detainers in place."
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/ice-california-operation-arrests>

Appeals Court Upholds Ban On Holding Migrant Kids In Hotels

By Nomaan Merchant – *The Associated Press* – October 5, 2020

- ❖ An appeals court refused Sunday [October 3] to allow the administration to resume detaining immigrant children in hotel rooms before expelling them under rules adopted during the coronavirus pandemic. Three judges on the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals left in place a lower court's order that requires the U.S. to stop using hotels in most situations to detain children unaccompanied by a parent. The judges denied the U.S. government's request for a stay of that order. Border agents since March have placed at least 577 unaccompanied children in hotel rooms before expelling them from the country without a chance to request asylum or other immigration protections. The appeals court judges were sharply critical of the administration during oral arguments, questioning why children in the hotels were not guaranteed access to lawyers and why the government wasn't using existing youth shelters that have thousands of empty beds. Those shelters offer legal services as required under a longstanding court settlement known as the Flores agreement. U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee's Sept. 4 order said hotel detention violated "fundamental humanitarian protections" and said the administration had not demonstrated that using hotels would prevent the spread of COVID-19. In total, the U.S. has expelled at least 147,000 people since March, including 8,800 children unaccompanied by a parent, according to government figures filed in court in September. Most are not detained in hotels. Many of those people have been directly sent back across the U.S.-Mexico border. Other people, including unaccompanied children, are held for days or weeks in Border Patrol facilities unequipped for long-term detention before they are taken to deportation flights.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-public-health-health-immigration-archive-f9a242986bed7890237c9286133b3281>



Honduran migrants trying to reach the U.S. get inside a truck escorted by the Guatemalan soldiers to send them back to Honduras.

Photo Credit: Luis Echeverria/REUTERS

Dissolved Migrant Caravan Sign Of Tougher Guatemala Stance

By Sonia Pérez D. – *The Associated Press* – October 5, 2020

- ❖ The Guatemalan government's halt of more than 3,000 Honduran migrants who had set out for the United States amid the pandemic signaled that U.S. pressure on immigration continues to extend southward. Previously, Guatemala did little to stop large movements of migrants crossing its territory. But President Alejandro Giammattei threatened to send the latest group back, saying they posed a health risk because of the coronavirus. Over the weekend Guatemala followed through, hauling 3,300 migrants back to the Honduran border. Guatemala's tougher stance followed Mexico's hardened efforts that broke up caravans last October and in January at its southern border. Mexico deployed the National Guard during the summer of 2019 to help slow immigration after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened tariffs on all Mexican imports. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Monday [October 5] that some small groups of migrants had crossed into Mexico, but that hundreds of immigration agents and national guardsmen put at the border had detained them. Guatemala and Mexico appeared to have coordinated their response. Guatemala's ambassador to Mexico accompanied Mexican officials inspecting the deployment of Mexican forces at their shared border.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/dissolved-migrant-caravan-sign-tougher-guatemala-stance-73438912>

Administration Plans To Slash Refugee Admissions To U.S. To Record Low

By Julie Watson and Matthew Lee – *The Associated Press* - September 30, 2020

- ❖ The administration has proposed further slashing the number of refugees the United States accepts to a new record low in the coming year. In a notice sent to Congress late Wednesday [September 30], just 34 minutes before a statutory deadline to do so, the administration said it intended to admit a maximum of 15,000 refugees in fiscal year 2021. That's 3,000 fewer than the 18,000 ceiling the administration had set for fiscal year 2020, which expired at midnight Wednesday [September 30]. The proposal will now be reviewed by Congress, where there are strong objections to the cuts, but lawmakers will be largely powerless to force changes. The U.S. allowed in just over 10,800 refugees — a little more than half of the 18,000 cap set by the President for 2020 — before the State Department suspended the program because of the coronavirus. The 18,000 cap was already the lowest in the history of the program. In addition, the State Department announced that it would no longer provide some statistical information on refugee resettlement, sparking more concerns.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-donald-trump-politics-united-states-immigration-f76797b97e8a0b66150d0269fe4f432b>

Sister Norma, A South Texas Icon, Named Among Time's 100 Most Influential People Of 2020

By Sandra Sanchez – Border Report – September 23, 2020

- ❖ Sister Norma Pimentel, the soft-spoken Catholic nun from South Texas who champions immigrant rights on the border, has an even bigger world stage after Time magazine recently named her among the Top 100 Most Influential People in 2020. On Tuesday [September 23] afternoon, she entertained a throng of local media on the compound of the Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan del Valle National Shrine, where she is executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. She made clear her intention of using the honor as a platform to bring attention to the suffering of asylum seekers living in a tent encampment in Matamoros, Mexico, across the Rio Grande from her hometown of Brownsville, Texas. "This honor is truly an honor for me to be recognized among so many other people who are doing extraordinary work in the world. To be recognized from being in our Rio Grande Valley brings me great joy because it brings that attention and presence to the Valley," said Pimentel, simply known as Sister Norma by people on both sides of the border here. "I invite everybody to join me to make sure that this is our moment." "I just hope that this brings attention to the fact that the whole immigration reality is not over. The humanitarian crisis is still very present and worse, especially on the other side of the border. All along the border we have families suffering, hurting, criminalized because we are forcing them to remain there instead of going through a legal process to identify their political asylum. So they find themselves struggling tremendously — in circumstances that it is not human for any human being to endure as long as they have," she said. Pimentel refers to the estimated 700 migrants who are part of the administration's Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, forced since July 2019 to await their U.S. immigration proceedings at the camp on the banks of the Rio Grande in Matamoros. Since last year, Pimentel has led an army of volunteers who have fed, clothed, tended to the medical needs of the migrants, and she has been a politically neutral point-person that officials from both the United States and Mexico have turned to for information and direction on what she calls a "humanitarian crisis" on the Southwest border. She has weekly conversations with Mexican immigration officials, the National Institute of Immigration (INM) and she has the personal ear of the pope, himself. She has testified before the United Nations and Congress, and been to the White House several times to advise our national leaders. She has met with the pope at the Vatican a few times. And she has won numerous awards from colleges and universities to national organizations. Time magazine called her an "icon" among 100 global influencers who include astronauts, professional athletes, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.borderreport.com/regions/texas/sister-norma-a-south-texas-icon-named-among-times-100-most-influential-people-of-2020/>
- ❖ Time Magazine Article: <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2020/5888284/sister-norma-pimentel/>

San Antonio Ranked No. 1 Among Texas Cities In Helping Immigrants Integrate In The Community

By Priscilla Aguirre – My San Antonio – September 24, 2020

- ❖ San Antonio recently ranked No. 1 among Texas cities for having policies that help immigrants integrate into the community and economy, according to a third annual New American Economy Cities Index on Immigration Integration (NAE). The NAE Cities Index is a national assessment of local integration policies and socioeconomic outcomes for immigrants in the largest 100 cities. The City of San Antonio shared its recent ranking in a news release, stating the NAE Cities Index ranked the Alamo City 29 out of 100 cities. It was the second year in a row where San Antonio listed as the top Texas city in the ranking. The index scored each city on the following policies to determine its ranking: job opportunities, economic prosperity, livability and civic participation. The report then puts the factors into five subcategories: government leadership, economic empowerment, inclusivity, community and legal support. In the 2020 report, San Antonio received an NAE badge of distinction for its high performance (scoring a four or five out of five) in the following categories: government leadership, community, legal support and livability. From its data, the report showed that immigrants in the San Antonio metro area paid \$1.8 billion in taxes in 2018. It also highlighted how there were 26,689 immigrant entrepreneurs in 2018 as well as 121,131 immigrants who became eligible to vote in the San Antonio as of 2018. According to the city's news release, San Antonio responded to an influx of immigrants and created the Migrant Resource Center (MRC) in 2019. The MRC welcomed 32,343 immigrants and assisted them with travel to their respective host cities, shelter, meals and medical needs, the release stated. The center served 85,471 meals, gave 2,600 medical assessments, and provided over 22,000 beds to the visitors in the city. Additionally, 1,200 city staff and 600 community volunteers put in 41,000 hours of work to provide the necessary support to migrant families at the MRC. The release also noted San Antonio-hosted five free citizenship clinics and held three large naturalization ceremonies, including the first naturalization ceremony held at the City Council Chamber in more than a decade.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-ranked-No-1-among-Texas-cities-in-15593981.php>

Administration Reimposes "Public Charge" Immigration Wealth Test Following Court Orders

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez – CBS News – September 22, 2020

- ❖ The administration on Tuesday [September 22] said it is reimposing its "public charge" wealth test for green cards that had been blocked during the pandemic, a move likely to alarm advocates, who have warned about the policy's impact on immigrant communities ravaged by the coronavirus. The 2019 rule, which gives officials more power to deny permanent residency to applicants the government deems rely or could rely on public benefits like food stamps or housing vouchers, was blocked in late July by a federal judge who found it was hampering efforts to contain the virus. Citing declarations by doctors and local officials who said immigrants across the country feared they could jeopardize their immigration status by seeking medical treatment and government aid during the pandemic, Judge George Daniels blocked the policy's implementation for the duration of the national coronavirus emergency. However, subsequent orders by the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals, including one earlier this month, limited and ultimately suspended Daniels' ruling, allowing the administration to again enforce the public charge test. In updated guidance on its website on Tuesday, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said it would apply the 2019 public charge test to all future and pending green card applications filed after February 24, 2020, when the agency implemented the rule following the Supreme Court's green light. Applications filed after Daniels' injunction in July that have been approved will not be re-adjudicated, USCIS said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-public-charge-immigration-wealth-test-court-ruling/>

DETENTION CENTERS NEWS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ICE Ordered To Reduce Population At Adelanto Immigrant Detention Center Hit By COVID-19

By City News Service – September 30, 2020

- ❖ A federal judge in Los Angeles on Tuesday [September 29] ordered the immediate reduction of the population of the Adelanto ICE processing center due to an outbreak of COVID-19 spreading through the facility. Of 784 immigrants housed at the 1,940-bed detention center, 81 have tested positive for the coronavirus, including nine requiring hospitalization, according to U.S. District Judge Terry Hatter's written ruling. The outbreak was most likely caused by a sick staff member, but contact tracing has apparently not been conducted and the source of the outbreak has not been identified, according to Hatter's order, which modifies a prior injunction. Hatter said a previous plan to test all Adelanto detainees was quashed "for an unjustified and arbitrary reason" by Gabriel Valdez, ICE's assistant field office director at Adelanto.
 - Hatter ordered that ICE must:
 - File a population reduction plan that allows detainees to maintain six feet of social distance at all times;
 - Halt intake of any additional detainees at the facility pending further order of the court;
 - Administer weekly COVID-19 tests to all Adelanto detainees who agree to it;
 - File a complete census of all detainees starting Oct. 12 and every Monday thereafter;
 - Require staff to remain six feet away from and to wear masks when in housing units and interacting with one another and detainees;
 - Provide detainees with masks and create conditions that allow for social distancing among detainees; and
 - Provide detainees, at no cost, with sufficient cleaning supplies, soap, paper towels and hand sanitizer and to keep those supplies in stock.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-09-30/ice-detention-center-covid-19-outbreak>

The Death Toll In ICE Custody Is The Highest It's Been In 15 Years

By Catherine E. Shoichet – CNN – September 30, 2020

- ❖ The number of deaths in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody grew dramatically this year. In the 2020 fiscal year, which ends today, 21 people died in ICE custody, according to a CNN tally of data released by the agency. That's more than double the number of deaths in fiscal year 2019 -- and the highest annual death toll since 2005. More than a third of the people who died in ICE custody this year had tested positive for Covid-19 -- including a 56-year-old man from the Marshall Islands, who died in a Louisiana hospital, and a 61-year-old man from Mexico, who died in a Georgia hospital last week. The total number of people detained in ICE facilities has decreased significantly during the pandemic. Last year, the average daily population in ICE custody was 50,165 people. According to the latest statistics provided by the agency, as of September 25 there were 19,791 people in ICE custody. ICE said at the beginning of the pandemic, it released more 900 individuals from custody after evaluating their records and is using the same methodology to evaluate "other potentially vulnerable populations currently in custody and while making custody determinations for all new arrestees." There have been more than 6,100 confirmed coronavirus cases among ICE detainees since the pandemic began. Three of the detainees who died this year had been held at the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, before they were hospitalized with coronavirus. That's the highest death toll tied to any one ICE facility this year. A spokesman for CoreCivic, the private prison company that operates Stewart, said the company is working closely with ICE to ensure the health and safety of everyone at the facility.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/30/us/ice-deaths-detention-2020/index.html>

Lawmakers Who Toured Georgia Detention Site Raise Concerns

By Don Babwin – Associated Press – September 26, 2020

- ❖ Several members of Congress called for a detention facility in Georgia to be shut down pending investigation after women detainees told them of being forced into unnecessary gynecological procedures with dirty equipment that left serious infections amid conditions so unsanitary that some begged to be deported. “This is a horror show, it truly is worse than I expected,” Rep. Juan Vargas, a California Democrat, said after talking to several detainees on the visit to the Irwin County Detention Center, where both detainees for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and inmates for the U.S. Marshals Service are housed. While many of the allegations made by the women centered on Dr. Mahendra Amin, a gynecologist accused of performing surgeries without their consent, members of the Congressional delegation recounted stories about conditions and treatment that extended beyond those accusations — starting with the alleged failure to take even the most basic steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They said, for example, that the women reported they were issued one paper mask and were forced to wear it for weeks at a time before they were finally given new masks the day before at least 10 members of Congress paid a visit. They also reported accounts of unsanitary and filthy conditions that put the detainees at risk of becoming seriously ill. Rep. Raul Ruiz, a California Democrat who is also an emergency physician, said he saw in shower stalls the kind of black mold that can cause or exacerbate serious pulmonary diseases. But much of what they were told reiterated the allegations of other women held at the facility who have come forward complaining that Amin performed hysterectomies and other procedures that they did not understand or agree to. Many of the allegations against the doctor were first revealed in a recent complaint filed by a nurse at the detention center, Dawn Wooten, who alleged that many detained women were taken to an unnamed gynecologist whom she labeled the “uterus collector” because of how many hysterectomies he performed. The Associated Press subsequently reported that at least eight women since 2017 had been taken to see Amin for gynecological treatment, though it did not find evidence of mass hysterectomies as alleged in the complaint. Andrew Free, an attorney taking part in an investigation of medical care at the detention center, said a team of lawyers had heard concerns about the doctor from dozens of women.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-georgia-archive-juan-vargas-immigration-0fe6d826fc27e5fde3f7d810c05f9716>

The Troubling State Of Medical Care In ICE Detention

By Isaac Chotiner – The New Yorker – September 25, 2020

- ❖ A nurse at a privately run immigration-detention facility in Irwin County, Georgia, filed a whistle-blower complaint alleging that women at the facility were undergoing hysterectomies without their informed consent. The whistle-blower, Dawn Wooten, filed her complaint to the office of the Department of Homeland Security’s inspector general, which is now investigating the claims; Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has responded by saying that there are only records of two hysterectomies performed in the past two years on women at the facility, which is run by LaSalle Corrections. Several women have come forward to complain about their experiences of gynecological exams and procedures while at Irwin, and some have hired lawyers. Wooten’s complaint also states that the facility’s operators did not take proper safety measures for COVID-19; this was the subject of a separate complaint, made in July by another whistle-blower, about a LaSalle facility in Louisiana. To discuss the whistle-blower complaint, and the Irwin County facility and ICE detention centers more broadly, Isaac spoke by phone with Eunice Cho, a senior staff attorney at the A.C.L.U.’s National Prison Project. In 2016, she wrote a report for the Southern Poverty Law Center about ICE detention facilities across the South, which singled out Irwin for the low quality of its medical care.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/the-troubling-state-of-medical-care-in-ice-detention>

Immigrants In U.S. Custody Died After 'Inadequate' Medical Care, Congressional Investigation Finds

By Geneva Sands – CNN – September 24, 2020

- ❖ Immigrants in U.S. custody faced widespread failures in medical care, including some issues that resulted in death, according to a new congressional investigation released Thursday [September 24]. At U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities operated by for-profit contractors, detainees “often do not receive critical treatment or face delays,” the inquiry found. Additionally, the review found that many of the for-profit facilities lack sufficient medical staff and failed to provide necessary care for chronic medical conditions. In some cases, there were delays in emergency care, staffing shortages and poor sanitation, according to the investigation led by House Oversight and Reform Committee Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney of New York and subcommittee chairman Jamie Raskin of Maryland. For its investigation, the committee requested documents from ICE and two for-profit contractors, CoreCivic and GEO Group. The two companies operate facilities with more than 80% of all people in ICE detention. Committee staff also inspected 22 Department of Homeland Security facilities in six states, including ICE detention centers, as well as Customs and Border Protection (CBP) facilities. The findings of the new investigation come after a whistleblower who previously worked at an ICE facility in Georgia detailed a high rate of hysterectomies and alleged medical neglect in a complaint filed to the DHS inspector general.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/24/politics/immigrants-ice-inadequate-medical-care/index.html>

124 Immigrant Children Held In 3 Phoenix Hotels Under Trump Policy, Court Records Show

By Daniel Gonzalez – Arizona Republic – September 23, 2020

- ❖ A federal judge has given the administration until Sept. 28 to stop the practice of holding immigrant children in hotels for prolonged periods under a secretive policy that rapidly expels undocumented immigrants who arrive at the border amid the coronavirus pandemic. U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee denied on Monday [September 21] the administration's request to put on hold her original Sept. 4 order to end the practice while an appeal is pending. The administration has been holding hundreds, and possibly thousands, of immigrant children in hotels in Phoenix and several other cities under emergency pandemic measures implemented in March to quickly expel undocumented immigrants, including children. In the past, immigrant children were transferred to state-licensed supervised shelters and provided a chance to apply for asylum. Gee ruled Sept. 4 that the government's detention of children longer than 72 hours violated the decades-old Flores settlement that governs the treatment of immigrant children in custody. She had ordered the administration to stop holding immigrant children in hotels as part of the policy by Sept. 15, with limited exceptions, but the practice has continued while the administration sought stays pending an appeal. A review of federal court records by The Arizona Republic, part of the USA TODAY Network, shows that a total of 660 immigrant children were held at 26 hotels between April 18 and July 31 as part of an administration policy to expel undocumented immigrants rapidly. The hotels were located in Phoenix; in El Paso, McAllen, Pharr, Houston and San Antonio, Texas; and in Alexandria, Louisiana, court records show. Of the 660, 577 of the children were minors not accompanied by parents. The data was included in court records filed by the National Center for Youth Law and the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, plaintiffs in the Flores settlement case, based on data provided by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. An analysis by the National Center for Youth Law of the ICE data provided by ICE found several inconsistencies, including discrepancies in the dates some children were held in hotels and more alarmingly discrepancies in which cities they were held, court records show. The children ranged in age from 3 months to 17 years and were held in hotels as long as 29 days by a private contractor, MVM Inc., working for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, court records show.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/immigration/2020/09/23/124-immigrant-children-held-3-hotels-phoenix-court-records-show/3496302001/>

MIGRANTS IN MEXICO

Migrants Stranded In Mexico Have 1 Year To File For Asylum. Covid-19 Is Making That Deadline Nearly Impossible

By Jasmine Aguilera – Time – September 25, 2020

- ❖ Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the U.S., Charlene D'Cruz and a group of other volunteer immigration attorneys traveled several days a week across the U.S. Southern border from Brownsville, Texas, to the Mexican city of Matamoros to give advice to some of the thousands of asylum seekers desperately attempting to enter the U.S. Due to the pandemic, immigration courts shut down and many migrants waiting in Mexico are missing deadlines to apply for asylum. The attorneys, working remotely, are scrambling to submit applications in the hope they will be accepted. Since the enacting of the Migrant Protections Protocols (MPP) program in January 2019—which requires asylum seekers to wait in Mexico until a judge decides their case—an increasing number of asylum seekers began amassing at major ports of entry spanning the border, including Matamoros. According to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, more than 66,000 people have been placed into the MPP program, and some formed makeshift encampments in front of ports of entry into the U.S. to be close whenever they received an opportunity to see an immigration judge. One of the largest encampments has formed in Matamoros, in front of the international bridge. The situation at the border was already difficult for those waiting, living in the camp sheltering up to 2,000 people or more, including children. While some could secure jobs in Matamoros, others have depended on the food provided by charitable organizations, and can only bathe in makeshift showers. When COVID-19 began spreading in the U.S., immigration courts shut down, leading to indefinite delays for hearings. Lawyers haven't been able to travel to Matamoros. They have adjusted to providing legal services remotely from the U.S. with the help of an on-the-ground assistant in Matamoros. But soon a realization emerged: many asylum seekers are on the verge of missing their one-year deadline to submit their applications for asylum. By law, migrants are expected to apply for asylum within one year of their entry into the U.S. But many asylum seekers stuck in Mexico as part of MPP—also known as the "Remain in Mexico" (RIM) program—missed that deadline as immigration courts along the border were shut down because of the pandemic. It is unclear, given the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, whether the asylum seekers will receive a second chance to apply. It is impossible to know how many total asylum seekers across the border have missed their one-year deadlines.
- ❖ To read the Committee on Oversight and Reform and Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties report, go to: <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2020-09-24.%20Staff%20Report%20on%20ICE%20Contractors.pdf>
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://time.com/5888791/covid-19-asylum-seekers-mexico/>

El Paso Bishop Finds Desperation, Hope During Visit To Juárez Migrant Shelters

By Lauren Villagran – *El Paso Times* – September 25, 2020

- ❖ El Paso Catholic Bishop Mark Seitz visited migrant shelters in Juárez and said he met a desperate but resilient population whose wait for an opportunity to claim asylum in the U.S. has stretched on months beyond expectations. As COVID-19 continues to grip the Borderland, migrants awaiting court dates in the U.S. under the administration's Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP) remain holed up in Juárez shelters. Some have waited more than a year to have their asylum claim reviewed by an immigration judge in El Paso, Seitz said. Others have been quickly returned to Juárez by U.S. Border Patrol (CBP) after crossing into the U.S., under authority granted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Title 42 order. Under the order, CDC prohibits CBP from holding migrants in "congregant settings," such as holding cells, to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Seitz visited three Juárez shelters, as well as a "filter hotel" where migrants can quarantine after being returned or deported from the U.S. "The bishop is really interested in supporting the humanitarian needs of migrants in Juárez," said Dylan Corbett, director of the Hope Border Institute, who accompanied the bishop on his tour. El Paso's Catholic Diocese provided shelter and aid to migrants when earlier waves of asylum seekers crossed the U.S.-Mexico border. But as policies such as the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) and Title 42 order have pushed migrants back to northern Mexican border cities — and transferred the burden to care for them to Mexico — the bishop has sought to provide assistance south of the border. In July 2019, he created the Border Assistance Refugee Fund, which has since raised more than \$200,000, Corbett said. The bishop has disbursed funds to Juárez shelters for medical supplies, personal protective equipment, to pay for life-saving surgeries and build infrastructure including new shelter buildings, flood control and heating and cooling systems. U.S. Customs and Border Protection returned 147,601 migrants under Title 42 authority between March and August at the Southwest border. CBP declined to break down the number of people returned to Juárez, citing ongoing litigation over the policy.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/2020/09/25/el-paso-bishop-brings-aid-juarez-migrant-shelters-amid-pandemic/3527200001/>



A woman sweeps at the tent camp of Matamoros that was set up last year by migrants waiting in Mexico for the U.S. asylum hearings.

Photo Credit: Alyssa Schujar/New York Times

Obstacles Mount For 'Remain In Mexico' Migrants

By Silvia Foster-Frau – *San Antonio Express-News* – September 16, 2020

- ❖ The bridge connecting Matamoros to Brownsville used to be a symbol of hope for thousands of asylum-seekers. They made an encampment of tarp and garbage bags right next to it, their tents often facing the Rio Grande and the U.S. But with court hearings postponed amid the pandemic, a lack of U.S. immigration lawyers in northern Mexico, fear of kidnapping and a recent hurricane, the migrants in Matamoros and all along the border have the slimmest of chances of getting into the U.S. More than 43,800 cases have been completed for the migrants who were caught in the administration's Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), which requires them to wait in Mexico while they attend hearings on the U.S. side. The policy began in January 2019 but largely has been shelved. Most migrants now are quickly deported without asylum hearings. Only 525 migrants — just over 1 percent — were granted asylum or another form of relief this year. The rest were deported, or their cases were terminated. About 21,000 migrants still are stuck in the process, waiting for the courts to reopen to resume their hearings, according to the nonprofit Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC). More than 32,500 MPP migrants already have received orders of removal. And more than 28,000 of those orders were because the migrants missed their court hearings. Since October 2019, 89 percent of the migrants who were allowed into the U.S. attended every court hearing. But only about 50 percent of migrants waiting in Mexico are attending all their hearings, TRAC found. Though the MPP program was reduced this year, August showed an uptick in MPP cases, with about 770 migrants put into the program, compared with only 124 in May. The majority of the MPP cases in August occurred in El Paso, with nearly 500 migrants put into MPP, followed by the Del Rio sector at 74. More than 3,800 MPP migrants this year have attempted to re-enter the U.S., according to data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection. In Matamoros, the encampment that once had held more than 2,500 migrants has dropped to below 1,000.
- ❖ Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/Obstacles-mount-for-Remain-in-Mexico-15570211.php>

COURT RULINGS

Judge Partially Blocks Administration From Enforcing Visa Ban

By Michelle Hackman – The Wall Street Journal – October 1, 2020

- ❖ A federal judge in San Francisco has blocked the administration from enforcing its ban against many of the biggest U.S. companies bringing in foreign workers under H-1B and other employment-based visas. The ruling applies to workers for companies represented by the plaintiffs in the suit: the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Retail Federation and TechNet. Together, the four organizations represent hundreds of thousands of companies, including major Silicon Valley technology employers, significant names in manufacturing and pharmaceuticals, and some small businesses. The order, in effect until the end of the year, is national in scope, though it doesn't apply to employers not represented by one of the four plaintiffs. John Baseline, executive director of Immigration Policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said the "ruling against the implementation of these sweeping restrictions on legal immigration is a great victory for American businesses and our nation's economy." It isn't clear how the judge's order will be enforced, as it would require U.S. consular officers and immigration officials to discern which companies are represented by the plaintiffs. The State Department didn't respond to a question about how it planned to enforce the judge's decision. The temporary ban issued in June, bars foreigners on H-1B or other work visas from coming to the U.S. through the end of this year or longer, should the president extend it. In addition to H-1B visas, the suit applied to H-2B visas for short-term seasonal workers in landscaping and other nonfarm jobs; J-1 visas for short-term workers including camp counselors and au pairs; and L-1 visas for internal company transfers.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/judge-partially-blocks-trump-administration-from-enforcing-visa-ban-11601593554>

Judge's Order Leaves Many Visa Lottery Winners Out Of Luck

By Julie Watson – The Associated Press – September 30, 2020

- ❖ A federal judge on Wednesday [September 30] ordered the administration to save more than 9,000 U.S. slots for visa lottery winners affected by the government's freeze on green cards earlier this year. But tens of thousands of other visa lottery winners will be out of luck. U.S. District Court Judge Amit Mehta acknowledged that his order will mean only about half of the so-called diversity visas issued normally each year will be used. He said in his ruling that he gave the State Department leniency due to the coronavirus pandemic. Mehta rejected a request by lawyers to order 30,000 slots be saved for people who won the lottery but hadn't yet been vetted. With about 15,400 visas issued so far in the 2020 fiscal year that ended Wednesday [September 30], the additional 30,000 sought by advocates for the lottery winners would have brought the total close to the annual average of 47,404 over the previous 18 years. The judge said that the impact of COVID-19 on the State Department's processing capacity needed to be taken into account, bringing him to order a total of 9,095 slots be saved. The United States makes available up to 55,000 visas a year for immigrants whose nationalities are underrepresented in the U.S. population. The winners are randomly chosen from a pool of about 14 million applicants to be given green cards that would let them live permanently in the United States. But the winners must be vetted and have the visas in hand by Sept. 30 of the year they were chosen or they lose out. This year, the State Department had issued little more than 12,000 visas for the 2020 lottery when President Donald Trump in April extended a freeze on many green cards issued outside the United States to the end of the year, including the lottery's visas. On Sept. 4, Mehta ordered the State Department to resume issuing the visas ahead of the Sept. 30 deadline, partially reversing the freeze.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/judge-order-leaves-us-visa-lottery-winners-luck-73355048>

A Federal Court May Have Declared Immigration Arrests Unconstitutional

By Michael Kagan – The Hill – September 20, 2020

- ❖ When police arrest people for suspected crimes, the U.S. Constitution requires them to show probable cause to a judge within 48 hours. But Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) does not do that. When ICE arrests people, it typically holds them for weeks before any judge evaluates whether ICE had a valid legal basis to make the arrest. That may need to change. A federal appellate court in California recently did something that is at once simple and radical. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said the usual constitutional rules that apply to normal police all over the country also apply to ICE. "The Fourth Amendment requires a prompt probable cause determination by a neutral and detached magistrate," the court said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/516740-a-federal-court-may-have-declared-immigration-arrests-unconstitutional>

Federal Judge Temporarily Blocks Immigration Fee Increases

By Michelle Hackman – *The Wall Street Journal* – September 29, 2020

- ❖ A federal court in San Francisco on Tuesday [September 29] temporarily blocked the administration from raising the cost of citizenship and other immigration applications, whose fees were set to increase at the end of the week. The Department of Homeland Security issued the fee increases in July and said they were intended to help shore up the cash-strapped agency that processes most immigration applications. Under the proposed fee increases, the cost of a citizenship application would have risen to \$1,160 from \$640, or more than 80%, and for the first time the U.S. would have charged a fee of \$50 to file an asylum application. Most fee waivers for low-income immigrants would have been eliminated under the changes. A group of immigrant-advocacy organizations sued to stop the fee changes. U.S. District Judge Jeffrey S. White of the Northern District of California issued a nationwide preliminary injunction, ruling that allowing the changes to go ahead while the lawsuit continues would irreparably harm immigrants who couldn't afford the new fees. "If it takes effect, it will prevent vulnerable and low-income applicants from applying for immigration benefits, block access to humanitarian protections, and will expose populations to further danger," Judge White, a George W. Bush appointee, wrote. The fee changes couldn't stand in part because they were issued by Chad Wolf, the acting secretary of homeland security, a U.S. judge found. Unless his decision is appealed, the fee increases will remain on hold until the judge reaches a full ruling in the case. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services "is reviewing the ruling on the fee rule and has no further comment at this time," the agency said in a statement. Judge White is the second federal judge to rule that Mr. Wolf's appointment was unlawful under the 2002 Homeland Security Act. Separately, a Maryland judge temporarily blocked new asylum rules on a similar basis. Federal judges can't practically evict Mr. Wolf from his post, though they can strike down policies he issues on the basis that he doesn't possess the proper authority to issue them.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/federal-judge-temporarily-blocks-immigration-fee-increases-11601434790>

DEPORTATIONS

ICE Preparing Targeted Arrests In 'Sanctuary Cities,' Amplifying President's Campaign Theme

By Nick Miroff and Devlin Barrett – *The Washington Post* – September 29, 2020

- ❖ The administration is preparing an immigration enforcement blitz next month that would target arrests in U.S. cities and jurisdictions that have adopted "sanctuary" policies, according to three U.S. officials who described a plan with public messaging that echoes the president's law-and-order campaign rhetoric. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operation, known informally as the "sanctuary op," could begin in California as soon as later this week. It would then expand to cities including Denver and Philadelphia, according to two of the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe sensitive government law enforcement plans. Chad Wolf, acting secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, probably will travel to at least one of the jurisdictions where the operation will take place to boost President Trump's claims that leaders in those cities have failed to protect residents from dangerous criminals, two officials said. Two officials with knowledge of plans for the sanctuary op described it as more of a political messaging campaign than a major ICE operation, noting that the agency already concentrates on immigration violators with criminal records and routinely arrests them without much fanfare. ICE officials have repeatedly warned cities and counties considering sanctuary policies that the agency would send more agents to make arrests in their jurisdictions, not fewer, if they go forward with their plans. According to the latest statistics, 70 percent of the arrests ICE makes occur after the agency has been notified about an immigrant's pending release from jail or state prison. ICE has lodged more than 160,000 such "detainers" with local law enforcement agencies since 2019, the agency said.
- ❖ News Article Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/trump-ice-raids-sanctuary-cities/2020/09/29/99aa17f0-0274-11eb-8879-7663b816bfa5_story.html

U.S./MEXICO BORDER WALL

Why A Private Section Of The Border Wall Is Allegedly Failing

By Sharyn Alfonsi – *60 Minutes Report* – September 27, 2020

- ❖ 60 Minutes reports on the construction firm that earned billions of dollars in government contracts after working with a conservative fundraising campaign accused of fraud to build sections of the border wall on private land that engineers say will likely fail.
- ❖ To watch the 60 Minutes report, go to: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/southern-border-wall-erosion-fisher-sand-and-gravel-60-minutes-2020-09-27/>

Administration In An All-Out Push To Build Border Wall Before Election

By Nick Miroff – *The Washington Post* – September 29, 2020

- ❖ President Trump's administration is racing to build his border wall as quickly as possible ahead of the Nov. 3 election, with construction crews now adding nearly two miles per day. It is an unprecedented pace toward meeting one of Trump's signature 2016 campaign promises. The latest figures from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) show the rate of construction has nearly doubled since the beginning of the year, accelerated by the government's ability to cut through national forests, wildlife preserves and other public lands already under federal control. In southeastern Arizona, blasting crews have been using dynamite to level the steep sides of Guadalupe Canyon, a rugged span where the cost of the barrier exceeds \$41 million per mile. Across the state at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, border agents have forcefully broken up protests by members of the O'odham Nation attempting to block the bulldozers near ancestral burial sites and a fragile desert oasis. CBP officials are preparing a ceremony for Trump next month that will mark the completion of 400 miles of new fencing. The administration has installed more than 341 miles so far, according to the latest figures, and CBP officials say they remain on track to finish at least 450 miles by the end of 2020. Progress has been slower in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, the busiest span of the border for illegal crossings and the region that CBP has identified as its top priority for barrier construction. Nearly all of the land where the government seeks to build is in private hands. The Trump administration has completed just five miles of new barriers in the Rio Grande Valley, CBP officials said, citing the difficulty of accessing and acquiring private land and the engineering challenges of installing the barriers along river levees. CBP officials said they have obtained about 40 percent of the land they need in the Rio Grande Valley. The president has obtained \$15 billion in federal funds for the project, but just one-third of that money has been authorized by Congress. The rest, nearly \$10 billion, has been diverted from the U.S. military budget, giving Trump enough to build 738 miles of new barriers, or enough to cover more than a third of the 2,000-mile boundary with Mexico. In addition to the 331 miles of new barriers completed so far, approximately 250 miles are "under construction" and an additional 157 miles are classified as "preconstruction," CBP figures show.
- ❖ News Article Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/trump-border-wall-push/2020/09/29/689bc740-f8f5-11ea-a510-f57d8ce76e11_story.html

DEVELOPING STORIES

Lawsuit Alleges USCIS Has Acted In Bad Faith Against H-1B Spouses

By Stuart Anderson – *Forbes* – October 6, 2020

- ❖ A new lawsuit alleges that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has acted in bad faith against the spouses of H-1B visa holders. The plaintiffs argue H-1B spouses cannot renew their H-4 employment authorization documents (EADs) because USCIS changed procedures to prevent the spouses from working in the United States. The plaintiffs say USCIS added an unnecessary biometrics requirement and adopted an erroneous interpretation of government regulations by prohibiting automatic extensions of H-4 work authorization. Plaintiffs' attorneys assert administration officials wanted to eliminate the regulation that allows the spouses of many H-1B visa holders to work but after failing to do so instead changed its policies to accomplish the same goal.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2020/10/06/lawsuit-alleges-uscis-has-acted-in-bad-faith-against-h-1b-spouses/#1a1a08013724>

Administration Wants To Screen Credit Scores, Tax Returns Of Immigrants' U.S. Sponsors

By Daniel Shoer Roth – *Miami Herald* – October 02, 2020

- ❖ American citizens, U.S. nationals and lawful permanent residents who sponsor an immigrant visa for a family member to live permanently in the United States must sign a legal and enforceable contract with the federal government known as the Affidavit of Support, agreeing to use their financial resources to support the immigrant. Last year, President Donald Trump signed a memorandum that revives an old self-sufficiency immigration law that requires sponsors of immigrants to reimburse the U.S. government for any federal means-tested public benefits the sponsored immigrant receives. And now, the Department of Homeland Security has announced a notice of proposed rulemaking that aims to "hold immigrant sponsors accountable for failing to meet the obligations of contracts they sign with the federal government." The proposed rule would require those who sponsor a green card for an immigrant to provide — along with the affidavit form — credit reports and credit scores, certified copies of income tax returns for the last three years, and bank account information, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services said. By providing these financial records, should the proposal be approved after a period for comments, the petitioners would "effectively demonstrate they can maintain the required income" to sponsor a family member and in some cases an employee, said the immigration agency in a news release.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article246178150.html>

Administration Planning To Put Up Billboards Of Immigration Violators Ahead Of Election

By Maria Santana and Priscilla Alvarez – CNN – September 30, 2020

- ❖ The administration is considering putting up billboards of immigration violators, an unprecedented move in lockstep with the President's law-and-order message ahead of the election, according to two sources familiar with the proposal. The billboards would be put up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) -- the enforcement arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) -- in at least one city and would call attention to immigrants who have committed crimes and been released by local authorities. It's unclear what the billboards will look like and at what cost. If the plan proceeds, it seems intended to single out sanctuary jurisdictions and stoke fear within those communities. ICE did not immediately comment for this report.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/30/politics/immigration-sanctuary-city-billboards/index.html>

Privacy Of Biometric Data In DHS Hands In Doubt, Inspector General Says

By Dean DeChiaro – RollCall – September 29, 2020

- ❖ An inspector general's report is casting doubt on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) ability to protect its massive repository of personal data from hackers amid a push by the administration to vastly expand its collection of biometrics through the use of facial recognition and other tools. The report, released by the DHS inspector general's office on Sept. 23, found that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) failed to protect a collection of 184,000 facial images of cross-border travelers prior to a massive data breach last year. At least 19 of the images, which were collected through a pilot program at the Anzalduas Port of Entry in Texas, were later posted on the dark web. The report found that Perceptics, a subcontractor hired to help CBP collect biometric data on border crossers, violated DHS privacy policies when an employee used an unencrypted USB drive to transfer a set of facial scans to its own networks without the agency's authorization or knowledge. The data set was later obtained by hackers during a ransomware attack on Perceptics' servers. "This incident may damage the public's trust in the government's ability to safeguard biometric data and may result in travelers' reluctance to permit DHS to capture and use their biometrics at U.S. ports of entry," the inspector general's report said. If that's the case, the report has arrived at a tricky moment for DHS, which earlier this month proposed new regulations that would require both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals to submit biometric data in order to apply for a variety of immigration services, such as visas for themselves or family members. The proposal would allow for the collection of facial, iris and voice scans, along with DNA samples. DHS already maintains the largest database of personal biometric data in the entire federal government, according to the inspector general's report. It contains information on more than 250 million people, which is shared with the Pentagon and the Justice Department. Still, DHS says the further collection of biometric data, rather than biographic data, will help crack down on immigration fraud.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.rollcall.com/2020/09/29/privacy-of-biometric-data-in-dhs-hands-in-doubt-inspector-general-says/>



An Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer during an operation last year in Escondido, Calif.
Photo Credit: Gregory Bull/Associated Press

Immigrants Disproportionately Work Jobs That Put Them At The Highest Risk Of Coronavirus Infection

By the Week – September 28, 2020

- ❖ Millions of Americans were able to work at home and stay safe as the coronavirus pandemic exploded and continues to rage. But at least 1.87 million people kept working in America's farm and food processing industries — 790,000 of whom are immigrants — putting their health on the line to keep America fed, The Center for Public Integrity and Mother Jones report. About 43 percent of the 1.87 million frontline workers in 10 food processing industries that kept functioning through the pandemic are immigrants, Public Integrity found by analyzing census numbers and other data. A third of them are undocumented. Immigrants make up a far greater portion of these high-risk jobs than they do the total U.S. workforce, leaving them disproportionately likely to contract COVID-19. And yet the undocumented haven't been compensated for the additional risk they took on during the pandemic. They were left out of the federal government's coronavirus relief packages; Even filing jointly with an undocumented person would erase a citizen or legal resident's stimulus money. Unemployment and local relief programs were also restricted from the undocumented, pushing them to go to work even though meatpacking and other agricultural and food industry jobs often require working side by side. When some workers did fall ill, they either avoided medical treatment or pursued it without health insurance, they tell Public Integrity.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://theweek.com/speedreads/940190/immigrants-disproportionately-work-jobs-that-highest-risk-coronavirus-infection>

55,000 Foreigners Won Green Cards In The Visa Lottery. Here's Why Many Are Having Trouble

By Daniel Shoer Roth – Miami Herald – September 26, 2020

- ❖ It has been a complicated year for 55,000 foreigners who won the 2020 Diversity Immigrant Visa Program from among 14 million qualified entries, or more than 23 million individuals including family members. First, U.S. embassies and consulates around the globe halted, in March, non-emergency visa services due to the coronavirus pandemic — and only recently has the Department of State restarted phased routine services for immigrant and travel visas. Then, in April came President Trump's Proclamation 10014 suspending entry of immigrants who present a risk to the U.S. labor market. Meanwhile, all the diversity visas available for Fiscal Year 2020 must be issued no later than Sept. 30, 2020. Earlier this month, the U.S. District Court for the District Columbia ordered the administration to allow diversity visa lottery winners in, after a civil rights coalition filed a lawsuit challenging the administration's immigration ban. After the ruling, the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs said that, notwithstanding the presidential proclamation, "DV-2020 applicants may be processed in embassies and consulates where local health conditions and post resources allow." The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program allocates up to 55,000 permanent resident cards, known as green cards, for immigrants with historically low rates of immigration to the U.S. The winners were drawn from random selection by computer from among qualified entries. Ahead of a Sept. 30 deadline, foreigners have scrambled to find a consular interview, one of the key requirements for the issuance of an immigrant visa under the popular program. So far, the Department of State has issued only 14,636 of the 55,000 diversity visas allocated for Fiscal Year 2020, according to immigration attorney Curtis Morrison, who represents over 3,000 of the plaintiffs. As of Sept. 24, 2020, consular officers had approved issuance for 523 diversity visas to the principal applicants and derivatives in the cases associated with named plaintiffs, according to a court filing. A State Department spokesperson told Forbes magazine, that it was "unlikely that the U.S. would be able to accommodate all diversity visa applicants before Sept. 30 due to limitations brought on by the coronavirus pandemic." But visa applicants and their attorneys are optimistic that U.S. District Judge Amit P. Mehta, who is presiding over these cases, will extend the Sept 30 deadline.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article246009735.html>

15-Year-Old Girl Who Spent Her Life In The U.S. Facing Deportation After Hospital Arrest

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez – CBS News – September 25, 2020

- ❖ A 15-year-old girl who has lived in the U.S. with her family since she was an infant is now alone in government custody and facing deportation after she was arrested by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials at a Texas hospital. The teenager, who was born in Mexico and does not have legal status, went to a hospital in Edinburg, Texas, with her aunt after experiencing gallbladder-related pain, her attorney, Sarah Valdes, told CBS News. She was then referred to undergo surgery in another hospital in San Antonio. But the girl and her aunt, who is also undocumented, did not have proper documents to travel through a CBP checkpoint on the way to San Antonio. CBP operates dozens of highway checkpoints in the interior of the country near the borders with Mexico and Canada. At these checkpoints, designed to curtail human and drug smuggling, agents can ask travelers for their immigration status. CBP told CBS News that it learned of the family's status and sent Border Patrol agents to the Edinburg hospital to provide documents the child could use to travel through the checkpoint and to "process her and her aunt consistent with their immigration status." "There are protocols in place with area medical facilities to prevent delays or the detention of individuals traveling through the checkpoints to seek emergency medical care," CBP said in a statement. Valdes said CBP arrested the girl's aunt at the Edinburg hospital. The 15-year-old was taken to San Antonio and underwent the prescribed surgery, but CBP officials went to the second hospital and guarded the girl's room, according to Valdes. After the surgery, the 15-year-old girl, who found herself in a hospital without an accompanying adult family member, was taken into CBP custody and designated an unaccompanied migrant child. U.S. anti-trafficking law requires all government agencies, including CBP, to transfer undocumented minors classified as unaccompanied to the U.S. refugee agency, which holds children in shelters and other housing facilities. CBP officials confirmed the agency apprehended and processed the girl before transferring her to the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Her aunt, meanwhile, was "processed in accordance with CBP policy in relation to her immigration status" and sent to an U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center for adults, the officials added. Despite living in the U.S. for the vast majority of her life, the 15-year-old undocumented girl has now been placed in a U.S. government shelter while ICE seeks to deport her to Mexico. Her current predicament stems from her classification as an unaccompanied migrant child under a law that was enacted to protect recent border-crossing minors from exploitation. Valdes said her client also tested positive for coronavirus while hospitalized. The Administration for Children and Families, which oversees the Office for Refugee Resettlement, declined to comment on this story.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/15-year-old-girl-who-spent-her-life-in-the-u-s-facing-deportation-after-hospital-arrest/>

Immigrants Rush To Submit Citizenship Applications Days Before Fee Is Set To Soar

By Elvia Malagón – Chicago Sun-Times – September 24, 2020

- ❖ After using her savings to pay for rent and groceries during the coronavirus pandemic, Diana Garcia Hernandez found herself again dipping into her stash to cover the cost of an application to become a U.S. citizen. But Garcia Hernandez, 24, of Cicero, IL, knew if she didn't start the process to become a citizen this month, she would face an application fee that is set to rise from \$640 to \$1,160 — an 81% increase — on Oct. 2 as part of fee changes at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The details of the changes were made public July 31. She is among those in the Chicago area scrambling to submit immigration applications before the government imposes fee changes. The increase in demand comes as naturalization applications already faced a backlog, some caused by coronavirus shutdown-related delays. A nonprofit, Immigrants Like Us, recently was created to help immigrants navigate applications. Garcia Hernandez, who submitted her application for citizenship this week (Sept. 21-24), said she always wanted to become a citizen so she could vote. She came to the country when she was about 4 years old from Mexico. Her brother also wants to apply to become a citizen, but she wasn't sure if he'll be able to come up with the money before the deadline. His hours were cut at his job, and finances have been stretched thin, she said. "To raise over 80% (the fee) during a pandemic, it's ridiculous," she said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2020/9/24/21450833/chicago-immigration-uscis-fees-naturalization-increase>

Administration Is Proposing To Limit Student Visas To Two Years For Citizens Of 59 Countries

By Nicole Narea – Vox – September 24, 2020

- ❖ The administration is proposing a new rule to limit student visas to two years for citizens of 59 countries, potentially complicating the path to an American college degree for tens of thousands of foreign students. Student visas are currently valid for as long as students are enrolled in their course of study. But the proposed rule, published by the Department of Homeland Security, would limit the validity period to two years for certain immigrants under the theory that it will be easier to identify security threats and monitor compliance. The countries targeted are those that are designated as state sponsors of terrorism and those with a high rate of people who come to the U.S. and overstay their visas. After that two-year period, students will have to apply for an extension. It's not clear whether immigration officials could deny their request even if a student would need it to complete a traditional four-year undergraduate program or a PhD, which can take six years or longer. But if a student is taking longer than the typical time it takes to complete their course of study, they will have to provide evidence of "compelling academic reasons," a documented medical condition, or other circumstances beyond the student's control, including a natural disaster or national health crisis, according to the rule. That could potentially dissuade foreign students from enrolling in American universities, which are already experiencing a decline in foreign student enrollment — a critical source of talent and tuition. Foreign students generate an estimated \$32 billion in revenue annually and support more than 300,000 jobs, according to the think tank New American Economy. It's not clear if the rule will go into effect. The administration has only a few months to finalize the rule before January 2021, when a new administration could take over and abandon the proposal. But if President Trump wins a second term in November, time would be on his side. The proposal would affect citizens and people born in countries on the State Department's State Sponsors Terrorism List, including Iran, Syria, Sudan, and North Korea. It would also apply to citizens of another 55 countries with a more than 10 percent rate of visa overstays, including all but a few African countries. Some of those countries send large numbers of foreign students to the U.S., including Vietnam, Nigeria, and Nepal.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/9/24/21454348/trump-student-visa-rule-vietnam-nigeria-iran>

U.S. Ranked Sixth Among Countries Most-Accepting Of Migrants

By Justine Coleman – The Hill – September 23, 2020

- ❖ The U.S. ranked sixth among the countries most-accepting of migrants in 2019, according to a poll released on Wednesday [September 23]. Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index determined that the U.S. reached a score of 7.95 out of a possible 9.0, ranking as the sixth most-accepting nation for migrants last year. Canada ranked in first place with a score of 8.46. The U.S. also ranked behind Iceland, New Zealand, Australia and Sierra Leone. The index is based on three questions asked to people in each country about whether it's considered a good thing or a bad thing if migrants are living in their country, becoming their neighbors and marrying into their families. Nine in 10 in the U.S. said migrants becoming their neighbors was a good thing, while 87 percent said migrants living in their country and 85 percent said migrants marrying into their families were positive. Gallup surveyed residents in 140 countries on the three questions in 2016 and 2017 and 145 nations last year.
- ❖ For more information on Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index, visit: https://news.gallup.com/poll/320669/canada-migrants-sixth-place.aspx?utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_content=morelink&utm_campaign=syndication
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://thehill.com/homenews/news/517734-us-ranked-sixth-among-countries-most-accepting-of-migrants-in-2019>