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Frontispiece: A group of migrants entered the U.S. from Mexico through a hole in the border fence near Sasabe, Arizona in July 2023, and turned themselves in to a waiting CBP agent.
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Sabotaging the Rule of Law: The Coordinated Assault on U.S. Immigration Enforcement by the Anti-Borders Movement

Mateo Forero and Pawel Styrna

Abstract

This article examines the growing, increasingly violent resistance by pro-mass-migration radical forces to U.S. immigration enforcement following the return to meaningful enforcement under the Trump administration in 2025. It situates contemporary opposition to ICE within the broader context of the Biden-era border and illegal migration crisis and traces the progression from sanctuary policies and political non-cooperation to organized protests, violent riots, criminal resistance, and terrorist attacks directed at federal immigration law enforcement personnel. Drawing on developments in Los Angeles, Chicago, Portland, and Minneapolis, the article examines the interaction between anti-enforcement activists, sanctuary jurisdictions, political actors, criminal networks, and foreign interests in obstructing federal immigration policy. It argues that sustained resistance to the enforcement of immigration law raises broader questions concerning federal authority, public order, and the principle of equality before the law. It also undermines national cohesion and destabilizes the country from within. The article also considers the implications of these developments for the rule of law and draws comparative lessons for European and other Western societies confronting similar tensions between immigration enforcement and organized political resistance and even violent sabotage by extremist anti-borders forces.

Keywords: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Donald Trump, deportations, Los Angeles anti-ICE riots, sanctuary policies, radical terrorism, political violence.

Introduction

Immigration policy forms an integral piece of the Western rule-of-law framework. The consistent enforcement of immigration law defines national boundaries and determines who may enter and remain. Unfortunately, the anti-borders movement has a long and disturbing history of treating immigration laws as irrelevant inconveniences, and of characterizing those who wish to enforce those laws as racist and immoral. Even worse, this ideological demonization of immigration enforcement leads to refusals to cooperate with federal immigration law, as exemplified by sanctuary policies at the state and local levels in many, largely left-leaning parts of the United States – and even extends to violence or terrorism in attempts to hinder enforcement. Adhering to their simplistic black-and-white worldview, anti-borders radicals often feel morally obligated and justified to thwart enforcement at any cost. Ironically, in casting immigration enforcement officers as "authoritarian," the anti-ICE radicals show uncanny similarities with violent, paramilitary street-fighting organizations associated with revolutionary movements in history, such as Fascist Black Shirts, Nazi Brown Shirts, and Bolshevik Red Guards.

It is within this political context that the United States returned to intensified enforcement of its immigration laws following President Donald Trump's arrival to the White House in January 2025. That return came in the wake of former President Joe Biden's self-inflicted border and mass illegal migration crisis – a crisis in so many ways comparable to Europe's disastrous 2015 migration crisis initiated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel's welcome to hundreds of thousands of illegal aliens. While President Trump's policies represented merely a return to enforcing existing law (after four years of it being largely violated and ignored), pro-mass-migration voices on both sides of the Atlantic have misrepresented them as a sudden paroxysm of aggression against both "immigrants" and American citizen defenders of illegal aliens. Such misleading perspectives ignore both the historical context of a return to immigration enforcement, and the unprecedented flurry of sabotage, obstruction, and violence coming from anti-borders radicals who hope to blunt enforcement operations and make federal agents appear ruthless and authoritarian.

The coordinated campaign of obstruction and intimidation from anti-borders activists, certain politicians, and criminal elements reached a fever pitch within the past year, and quickly bore bitter fruit. Data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) document a dramatic escalation: assaults on ICE

officers rose by more than 1,300 percent, vehicular attacks surged by 3,200 percent, and death threats exploded by 8,000 percent between January 20 and December 31, 2025, relative to the prior year.[1] Regardless of whether these incidents involved criminal aliens resisting removal or radical agitators, they point to a deeply disturbing trend which must be taken into account when assessing the actions of enforcement officers within the current political climate.

This coordinated resistance should be condemned as both dangerous and unacceptable in a rule-of-law society for several reasons. First, as economist Thomas Sowell has noted, "[i]mmigration laws are the only laws that are discussed in terms of how to help people who break them."[2] Approaching immigration rules and regulations as some species of law that is acceptable to violate undermines the principle that no one is above the law. Secondly, coordinated resistance to the enforcement of immigration law shields and emboldens criminal illegal aliens at the expense of community safety (including in immigrant neighborhoods).[3] Third, this resistance imposes costs on taxpayers by forcing immigration enforcement agencies to expend more resources than would have been needed had the rule of law and common sense prevailed.[4] Finally, organized violence fuels the formation of a radical anti-American insurgency – one that could easily spill outside the realm of immigration and impact other aspects of our social and economic life.

This article offers much-needed context demonstrating both the conditions that made Trump's return to enforcement necessary, and the manifold ways in which local sanctuary politicians, illegal alien criminals, and anti-enforcement extremists have attempted to impede and demonize enforcement. It analyzes the progression from sanctuary policies to large-scale riots in Los Angeles, Portland, and Chicago. It then examines the high-profile incidents in Minneapolis during the enhanced immigration enforcement activities of Operation Metro Surge. The article also documents the direct political obstruction, criminal resistance, and terrorist attacks that have been leveled against ICE in the past year. It clarifies that far from being

[1] U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec., "Radical Rhetoric by Sanctuary Politicians Leads to an Unprecedented 1,300% Increase in Assaults Against ICE Officers and a 3,200% Increase in Vehicular Attacks," January 8, 2026, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2026/01/08/radical-rhetoric-sanctuary-politicians-leads-unprecedented-1300-increase-assaults.

[2] Thomas Sowell, *Social Justice Fallacies* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2023), 54.

[3] White House, "Sanctuary Cities Undermine Law Enforcement and Endanger Our Communities," March 20, 2018, https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/sanctuary-cities-undermine-law-enforcement-endanger-communities/.

[4] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, *The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration on United States Taxpayers – 2023 Cost Study* (March 2023), https://www.fairus.org/issue/publications-resources/fiscal-burden-illegal-immigration-united-states-taxpayers-2023.

trigger-happy amateurs all too eager to resort to violence, the officers working for ICE and other immigration enforcement agencies were forced to contend with often violent obstructionists at every turn. The article then shines a light on recent work by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) on particular aspects of these obstruction attempts and the federal government's response. It concludes by highlighting some important lessons for Europe and other Western nations regarding this topic.

The Historical Background

Critics of the Trump administration's return to immigration enforcement often neglect the chaotic mass illegal migration crisis that preceded it. Immediately upon entering office in January 2021, Democrat Joe Biden opened the floodgates to a massive and unprecedented border and illegal migration crisis by dismantling or pausing policies implemented by the first Trump administration (January 2017 – January 2021) that had helped secure the border and reduce illegal migration. As a result, nationwide encounters of illegal aliens spiked dramatically during the Biden years – from under 650,000 in 2020, to 2 million in 2021, 2.8 million in 2022, and peaking at over 3.2 million in 2023.[5] The numbers for 2024 were only slightly smaller, at just a little under 3 million encounters. Hundreds of thousands of illegal migrants headed or were sent to American communities, including major cities such as New York and Chicago, costing billions of dollars and putting incredible strain on local budgets and schools.[6] In addition, some illegal migrants committed heinous crimes, such as the brutal rape and killing of nursing student Laken Riley by a Venezuelan gang member in Georgia. The Biden border crisis and its fiscal and human costs angered American voters, who returned Donald Trump to office in November 2024 to fulfill his campaign pledge of stopping an out-of-control illegal migration crisis and restoring the rule of law.

Immediately in the wake of the presidential election, many "sanctuary" jurisdictions loudly underscored or expanded their policies prohibiting communication or cooperation with federal immigration officials. One example of the jurisdictions fortifying their illegal sanctuary policies in response to Trump's election victory was the City of Los Angeles moving to adopt formal sanctuary ordinances that

[5] U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "Nationwide Encounters," https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters.

[6] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, "Border Crisis Is Killing American Cities and Suburbs," February 11, 2024, https://www.fairus.org/legislation/executive/border-crisis-killing-american-cities-and-suburbs.

shield illegal aliens from removal proceedings.[7] Despite the fact that these policies are unconstitutional and in conflict with federal law, the number of sanctuary jurisdictions has skyrocketed from fewer than a dozen in the 1990s, to 564 in 2018, and at least 1,003 as of May 2025.[8] This includes 17 out of 50 states and even the nation's capital city, Washington, D.C. Much of this growth, particularly after 2016, stemmed from a desire by left-leaning jurisdictions to virtue-signal by defying Trump and his immigration enforcement agenda, regardless of the social or fiscal consequences. These policies not only exacerbate the costs to the federal government of immigration enforcement, but also often result in dangerous illegal alien criminals being released into the community rather than handed over to ICE.

From Sanctuary Policies to Coordinated Riots

What began as virtue-signaling policy statements, however, soon escalated into widespread disorder. A key reason is that no matter how strongly sanctuary jurisdictions emphasized their anti-enforcement and pro-illegal-alien policies, they failed to deter the federal government from energetically carrying out its duty of interior enforcement. Thus, like other extremist movements throughout history, anti-borders radicals became even further radicalized and willing to engage in violence when politically frustrated. At a tactical and "hearts and minds" level, they also felt that they could turn the side of popular sympathy against enforcement if ICE operations could be made to appear aggressive, overly escalatory, and chaotic (particularly since much of the mainstream media could be counted on to amplify only a part of the story and push a misleading and dishonest anti-ICE narrative).

The June 2025 anti-ICE riots in Los Angeles were the first clear escalation – and they set the tone for other flashpoints of chaos that would soon erupt. The disturbance started when ICE worksite enforcement operations in California resulted in over 118 arrests for suspected immigration violations.[9] What began as protests against these inspections quickly devolved into widespread violence.[10] Over the following

[7] Ibid.

[8] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, "Sanctuary Jurisdictions Across the U.S.," May 2025, https://www.fairus.org/issue/sanctuary-jurisdictions-across-us.

[9] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, "The Los Angeles Anti-ICE Riots Were a Coordinated Campaign of Disruption," September 5, 2025, https://www.fairus.org/press-release/los-angeles-anti-ice-riots-were-coordinated-campaign-disruption.

[10] U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec., "DHS Releases Statement on Violent Rioters Assaulting ICE Officers in Los Angeles, CA and Calls on Democrat Politicians to Tone Down Dangerous Rhetoric About ICE," June 7, 2025, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/06/07/dhs-releases-statement-violent-rioters-assaulting-ice-officers-los-angeles-ca-and.

days, the would-be demonstrators clashed with ICE personnel with intensifying hostility. They threw rocks, bottles, fireworks, and improvised explosives at officers, set vehicles ablaze and looted countless businesses, and blockaded freeways and federal facilities like the Metropolitan Detention Center. Property damage and response costs exceeded $32 million.[11] Although Los Angeles has a long history of civil unrest and violent riots, the 2025 anti-ICE riots were the biggest outbreak since the 1992 Rodney King riots and the 2020 George Floyd riots, both of which were anti-police.

California officials, including Governor Gavin Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, condemned the immigration enforcement operations, and redoubled their refusal to cooperate with ICE and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).[12] Given California's leftist politics and staunch sanctuary stance, this lack of assistance was not surprising. The defiance nevertheless exacerbated the chaos, allowing rioters to interfere with operations without meaningful local law enforcement intervention. President Trump responded by federalizing the California National Guard and deploying troops to quell the violence.[13] Authorities restored order by mid-June, but the incident highlighted how local sanctuary policies and defiant politicians emboldened violent resistance by demonizing immigration enforcement and remaining passive. They preferred to prolong chaos and disorder rather than deviate from their ideologically rigid sanctuary stance.

It bears emphasizing, as FAIR's investigative report on *The June 2025 LA Anti-ICE Riots* did, that this unrest was not spontaneous, but was rather a premeditated and coordinated campaign of disruption. Evidence from public records and news reports demonstrates that domestic anti-borders groups and foreign actors played pivotal roles in financing and organizing the riots.

Disruption by Domestic Anti-Borders Groups

Several domestic actors were active amid the unrest in LA, including anti-borders organizations like the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los

[11] Nick Butler, "Los Angeles Taxpayers to Foot Millions for 'Peaceful' Anti-ICE Protests," Fox News, June 21, 2025, https://www.foxnews.com/us/los-angeles-taxpayers-foot-millions-peaceful-anti-ice-protests.

[12] Kaylah Jackson, "Gavin Newsom Criticizes Trump's Protest Tactics and May Inflation Concerns: Morning Rundown," NBC News, June 11, 2025, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/gavin-newsom-criticizes-trumps-protest-tactics-may-inflation-concerns-rcna212246.

[13] Helen Jeong, "Trump Administration to Activate 2,000 Additional Military Troops to Los Angeles," NBC Los Angeles, June 17, 2025, https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/trump-administration-to-send-2000-additional-military-troops-to-los-angeles/3726777/.

Angeles (CHIRLA) and the Hispanic Federation.[14] These entities have histories of advocating for reduced immigration enforcement and amnesty policies. Other notable groups involved in the disorder included the Immigrant Youth Coalition and Unión del Barrio, which are known for mobilizing against ICE operations and promoting "no borders" ideologies through direct action.[15]

Funding flows for these organizations often stem from substantial government grants and private donations.[16] For instance, CHIRLA received nearly $34 million in state grants from California in fiscal year 2023, and was also the beneficiary of private contributions from Soros-linked entities.[17] The Hispanic Federation has similarly benefited from over $20 million in annual donations, including from corporate sponsors and progressive philanthropies, enabling large-scale advocacy efforts.[18] These funds support operational costs, with CHIRLA allocating portions to protest-related expenses, as revealed in financial disclosures amid congressional probes.[19]

In organizing the riots, many of these groups provided "know your rights" training sessions, organized direct action efforts,[20] conducted "community self-defense" tactics against ICE operations,[21] furnished legal support for arrested participants,

[14] Hispanic Fed'n, "LA Leaders Push Back on Escalating Immigration Crackdowns and Spotlight Community Resilience at Launch of Hispanic Federation's California Office," press release, June 11, 2025, https://www.hispanicfederation.org/news/la-leaders-push-back-on-escalating-immigration-crackdowns-and-spotlight-community-resilience-at-launch-of-hispanic-federations-california-office/.

[15] Rachel Uranga, "Death Threats, Vandalism, Investigations: L.A. Immigrant Rights Groups in the Fight of Their Lives," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 2025, https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-06-12/la-immigrant-rights-advocates.

[16] Kenneth Schrupp, "California Funds $73.6M to Anti-Deportation Groups, Sparking GOP Audit Demand," The Center Square, June 12, 2025, https://wcti12.com/news/nation-world/california-funds-736m-to-anti-deportation-groups-sparking-gop-audit-demand-human-rights-immigration-raids-protests-los-angeles-trump-administration.

[17] H. Comm. on the Judiciary, "House Judiciary Committee Opens Probe into Taxpayer-Funded Group's Potential Ties to LA Anti-ICE Riots," June 24, 2025, https://judiciary.house.gov/media/in-the-news/house-judiciary-committee-opens-probe-taxpayer-funded-groups-potential-ties-la.

[18] ProPublica, "Hispanic Federation Inc (EIN 13-3573852)," Nonprofit Explorer, December 2024 filing, https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/133573852.

[19] Frank Stoltze, "GOP Senator Accuses LA Immigrant Rights Groups of Aiding 'Unlawful' Acts During Ongoing ICE Protests," LAist, June 11, 2025, https://laist.com/news/republican-senator-accuses-la-immigrant-rights-group-of-aiding-unlawful-acts-during-ongoing-ice-protests.

20 SEIU 721, "SEIU 721 Joins Allies to Launch the 'Summer of Resistance,'" press release, June 13, 2025, https://www.seiu721.org/2025/06/seiu-721-joins-allies-to-launch-the-summer-of-resistance.php.

[21] Suyapa Portillo Villeda, "The Battle for Immigrant Los Angeles," Migrant Roots Media, June 13, 2025, https://www.migrantrootsmedia.org/articles/2025/6/13/the-battle-for-immigrant-los-angeles.

and distributed bail funds to release detainees quickly, facilitating sustained unrest.[22] For example, CHIRLA organized manifestations and supplied resources like transportation and supplies,[23] while the Hispanic Federation coordinated with partners to defend protesters publicly and legally.[24] These activities not only amplified participation by agitators, but also shielded organizers from immediate consequences.

Intervention by Foreign Actors and Agendas

Parallel to the domestic agitators, there was also evidence of foreign involvement in the LA unrest. This included foreign funding channeled through proxies and influence operations designed to exacerbate domestic divisions on immigration – especially from Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-affiliated groups that were possibly used for protest amplification.[25] For example, Neville Singham (a U.S. billionaire in China with CCP ties) funded groups like the Party for Socialism and Liberation, which was involved in the LA unrest.[26] Reports describe a "dark money network" sending millions to far-left entities advancing CCP propaganda and sowing discord on issues like immigration.[27] Foreign meddling with U.S. immigration enforcement was also evident from the Mexican government – which provided consular support to detained nationals and publicly condemned ICE operations (via Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum), while allegedly facilitating activist networks through diplomatic channels.[28]

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[22] NBCLA, "Hispanic Federation Launches LA Office to Support Immigrant Rights Groups," YouTube, June 12, 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0_VAO2xIKw.

[23] CHIRLA, "Happening NOW! Immigrant communities & allies gather this evening for an Interfaith Prayer Vigil to call for an end to immigration raids...," Instagram Reel, June 11, 2025, https://www.instagram.com/reel/DKvh9fHojsY/.

[24] UnidosUS, "National Latino and Civil Rights Groups Denounce Federal Overreach in Los Angeles Raids," press release, June 11, 2025, https://unidosus.org/press-releases/national-latino-and-civil-rights-groups-denounce-federal-overreach-in-los-angeles-raids/.

[25] Julia Bonavita, "Feds Probing Protest Funding as Officials Drop Hammer on Violent LA Rioters," Fox News, June 17, 2025, https://www.foxnews.com/us/feds-probing-protest-funding-officials-drop-hammer-violent-la-rioters.

[26] Ashes, "Understanding the Financial Backing of LA's 2025 Anti-ICE Riots," Ashes on Air, June 11, 2025, https://ashesonair.org/2025/06/11/understanding-the-financial-backing-of-las-2025-anti-ice-riots/.

[27] H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, "Letter to AG Bondi re: Neville Singham," June 13, 2025, https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Letter-to-AG-Bondi-re-Neville-Singham-061325-1.pdf.

[28] Julieta Aragón, "35 mexicanos detenidos por redadas en Los Ángeles; 'no son criminales', dice Sheinbaum," Zeta Tijuana, June 8, 2025, https://zetatijuana.com/2025/06/35-mexicanos-detenidos-por-redadas-en-los-angeles-no-son-criminales-dice-sheinbaum/.

Sources also indicate that Mexican cartels benefit from and indirectly support conditions that maintain open migration routes in the United States, as these enable their smuggling operations. These foreign criminal actors benefit from disrupting immigration enforcement efforts and weakening border security – which facilitates human trafficking, drug flows, and economic leverage.[29] Meanwhile, foreign elements also gain from sustained remittances and reduced deportations, while adversaries like China exploit chaos to divert U.S. resources from geopolitical priorities.[30] This disruption undermines U.S. national security by allowing foreign influence to erode domestic stability and policy coherence on immigration.

The Nationwide Metastasis of Anti-Borders Chaos

The orchestrated disturbances in Los Angeles were so dramatic that unrest soon spread in a coordinated fashion to other cities across the United States.[31] For example, Chicago and its suburbs became a focal point for violent opposition to federal immigration enforcement – particularly around the Broadview ICE Processing Center (a key facility for booking and deporting illegal aliens).[32] As DHS expanded its operations in Illinois to target criminal aliens and fraud networks, protests escalated into riots. Agitators blocked access to the ICE Processing Center, assaulted federal agents, and interfered with law enforcement operations. From October 3 to November 18, 2025, crowds repeatedly clashed with law enforcement, using tactics such as barricades, projectiles, and physical confrontations, all of which resulted in injuries to officers and disruptions to immigration enforcement activities.[33]

[29] Wade Miller, "Policy Brief: Nongovernment Organizations' Complicity in Human Trafficking and the Southern Border Invasion," America Renewing, March 17, 2025, https://americarenewing.com/issues/policy-brief-nongovernment-organizations-complicity-in-human-trafficking-and-the-southern-border-invasion/.

[30] Matthew Tragesser, "Threat From China Is Growing at Our Southern Border," The Heritage Found., April 15, 2024, https://www.heritage.org/border-security/commentary/threat-china-growing-our-southern-border.

[31] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, "FAIR Exposes Violent Anti-Borders Resistance That Justifies Decisive Federal Action," February 16, 2026, https://www.fairus.org/press-release/fair-exposes-violent-anti-borders-resistance-justifies-decisive-federal-action.

[32] Natasha Korecki, "How Immigration Enforcement Turned Sleepy Broadview into a Chaotic, Militarized Town," NBC News, October 13, 2025, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/broadview-illinois-ice-protests-chicago-immigration-rcna236519.

[33] Stephanie Wade et al., "Village of Broadview, IL Protest: 21 Arrested Outside ICE Facility as Protesters Clash with Police; 4 Officers Injured," ABC7 Chicago, November 15, 2025, https://abc7chicago.com/post/village-broadview-il-protest-several-detained-outside-ice-facility-protesters-push-designated-area-live/18154986/.

Chicago's longstanding sanctuary policies, which bar city employees from cooperating with ICE, amplified the unrest. Mayor Brandon Johnson publicly condemned the enhanced federal operations and urged residents to stand against law enforcement personnel.[34] Similar rhetoric from Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and local officials in Cook County (a major county in Illinois which includes Chicago and some of its adjacent suburbs) further inflamed tensions, creating an environment where protesters felt emboldened to obstruct federal law enforcement without fear.[35] The violence led to numerous arrests, delays in processing high-priority deportations, and economic impacts from property damage.

In Portland, Oregon, unrest also intensified in the fall of 2025 as federal immigration enforcement operations targeted alien smuggling networks and criminal elements in the region. Demonstrations outside an important ICE facility escalated into nightly riots featuring arson, laser attacks on officers, and attempts to breach secured areas.[36] A particularly violent episode occurred on October 22, 2025, when rioters firebombed a federal vehicle, injuring two agents. The unrest, which spanned from early October through mid-November, disrupted ICE deportations and endangered personnel, with reports of improvised explosives and physical assaults.[37]

Oregon's sanctuary laws, which prohibit state and local resources from being used for federal immigration enforcement, significantly exacerbated the chaos. Governor Tina Kotek and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler denounced the federal actions and refused to provide state police support, creating a permissive environment for agitators.[38] This official rhetoric emboldened organized groups, often linked to anarchist networks, and led to weeks of sustained violence. Federal authorities

[34] Fran Spielman, "Mayor Johnson Signs Executive Order Declaring City-Owned Properties 'ICE-Free Zones,'" *Chi. Sun-Times*, October 6, 2025, https://chicago.suntimes.com/immigration/2025/10/06/mayor-brandon-johnson-executive-order-city-owned-properties-ice-free-zones.

[35] U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec., "DHS Debunks Governor Pritzker's Harmful Lies About Operation Midway Blitz in Chicago," October 6, 2025, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/10/06/dhs-debunks-governor-pritzkers-harmful-lies-about-operation-midway-blitz-chicago.

[36] Joni Auden Land and Alejandro Figueroa, "Federal Officers Fire Tear Gas, Make Multiple Arrests During Protest Outside Portland ICE Facility," OPB, October 4, 2025, https://www.opb.org/article/2025/10/04/portland-ice-facility-protest/.

[37] Sara Roth and Kristyna Wentz-Graff, "Portland Protests Enter a New (Inflated) Era," OPB, October 17, 2025, https://www.opb.org/article/2025/10/17/portland-ice-immigration-customs-enforcement-oregon-protest-inflatable-national-guard/. Note: the ICE facility in question was located within the Lindquist Building.

[38] Gov. Tina Kotek, "31 Oregon Mayors Call for ICE to Halt Immigration Enforcement Actions Immediately," OPB, February 5, 2026, https://www.opb.org/article/2026/02/05/gov-tina-kotek-31-oregon-mayors-call-for-ice-to-halt-immigration-enforcement-actions-immediately/.

eventually declared unlawful assemblies and deployed reinforcements under existing powers, resulting in over 150 arrests.[39] Nonetheless, the incidents cemented Portland's reputation as a focal point for resistance to national immigration priorities.

Chaos in Minneapolis amid Operation Metro Surge

In December 2025, the Trump Administration launched Operation Metro Surge and deployed a contingent of ICE and CBP agents to the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and Saint Paul).[40] At first, the operation received little media attention and federal agents were met with minimal resistance. However, Minnesota was thrust into the national media when massive public benefits fraud was uncovered, particularly in the Somali community. These schemes involved child daycare programs that were siphoning half of $18 billion in taxpayer funds that were allocated for those services.[41]

Shortly after the new year, the Trump Administration responded to the news out of Minnesota by deploying an additional 2,000 ICE agents to the state. With these agents deployed, Operation Metro Surge officially became the largest DHS enforcement operation ever.[42] As a result, the media dedicated significant attention to covering the events in Minneapolis, and people congregated to protest federal immigration enforcement in the city. Others gathered with the intention of interfering with officers' ability to enforce the law.

It did not take long for tragedy to ensue. In the morning of January 7, 2026, ICE officers operating in Minneapolis had gotten their vehicle stuck in the snow. While attempting to remove the vehicle, several people began gathering around. Among them was Renee Good, a 37-year-old anti-borders activist known for her

[39] Troy Brynelson and Alex Zielinski, "Those Arrested at Portland ICE Protests Recount Disparate, Confusing Treatment by Federal Officers," OPB, December 3, 2025, https://www.opb.org/article/2025/12/03/protestors-arrested-at-portland-ice-facility-wait-months-without-charges/.
[40] U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec., "ICE Arrests 'Worst of the Worst' Criminal Illegal Aliens During Operation Metro Surge," December 4, 2025, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/12/04/ice-arrests-worst-worst-criminal-illegal-aliens-during-operation-metro-surge.
[41] Hannah Fingerhut and Giovanna Dell'Orto, "Half of $18B in Federal Funds for Minnesota-Run Programs May Have Been Defrauded, Official Says," Associated Press, December 18, 2025, https://apnews.com/article/minnesota-fraud-charges-fbad68312012dc02a4060852474f72ee.
[42] "2,000 Federal Agents Sent to Minneapolis Area to Carry Out 'Largest Immigration Operation Ever,' ICE Says," PBS NewsHour, January 6, 2026, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/2000-federal-agents-sent-to-minneapolis-area-to-carry-out-largest-immigration-operation-ever-ice-says.

involvement in "ICE watch" groups.[43] Good, who had a history of participating in organized efforts to monitor and disrupt federal operations, parked her SUV diagonally on the street to block the road. Attempting to clear the obstruction, federal officers approached the vehicle.[44] Good began to reverse her SUV while an officer attempted to open the driver door to remove Good. Suddenly, Good shifted her car into drive and lurched forward toward a second officer. As she sped forward, Ross reached for and drew his sidearm in self-defense, firing three shots through the windshield.[45] Good died from her injuries.

The death of Renee Good immediately stoked the already-inflamed tensions and engulfed the city in chaos. In response to these events, Minnesota officials encouraged residents to obstruct and interfere with ICE operations. Governor Walz encouraged citizens to use their phones to record federal officers conducting immigration enforcement operations in the state.[46] Walz stated that these videos would be used to "establish a record for future prosecutions" of federal officers. Walz also referred to Operation Metro Surge as a "federal occupation of Minnesota" and a "campaign of organized brutality against the people of our state." Further, Walz stated that "Minnesota's justice system will have the last word" on whether federal officials would be prosecuted for their actions while in the line of duty.

Tragically, amid these tensions, another fatality occurred. Around 9 a.m. on January 24, 2026, a group of activists, including Alex Pretti (a 37-year-old ICU nurse and vocal anti-borders advocate), confronted federal agents by a doughnut shop during an arrest attempt.[47] Pretti had prior encounters with ICE, including a January 13, 2026 incident captured on video where he harassed officers and

[43] "New Documents Shed Light on Renee Good's Ties to ICE Monitoring Efforts in Minneapolis," CNN, January 13, 2026, https://www.cnn.com/2026/01/13/us/renee-good-minneapolis-ice-monitoring-school-invs.

[44] "Video Analysis of ICE Shooting Sheds Light on Contested Moments," *N.Y. Times*, January 15, 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/15/video/ice-shooting-renee-good-minneapolis-videos.html.

[45] David J. Harris Jr (@DavidJHarrisJr), "NEW: POV footage shows the Minneapolis ICE agent standing directly IN FRONT of the vehicle as Renee Good accelerated toward him. The left's lies are falling apart. The agent fired in self-defense." X, January 9, 2026, https://x.com/DavidJHarrisJr/status/2009686110763704429.

[46] Governor Tim Walz, "Governor Walz Statement on Third Shooting Involving Federal Agents in Minnesota," January 24, 2026, https://mn.gov/governor/newsroom/press-releases/?id=1055-720841.

[47] Gaby Vinick et al., "A Minute-by-Minute Timeline of the Fatal Shooting of Alex Pretti Involving Federal Agents," ABC News, January 26, 2026, https://abcnews.com/Politics/minute-minute-timeline-fatal-shooting-alex-pretti-federal/story?id=129547199.

kicked the taillight of a federal vehicle.[48] Outside the doughnut shop, Pretti approached closely, recorded the scene, and interfered by standing in agents' faces. As the altercation continued and intensified, one of the officers used pepper spray against Pretti.[49] Subsequently, three officers brought Pretti to the ground and held him down. During the struggle, an agent removed a gun that Pretti was carrying. Almost immediately, shots were fired – initially appearing accidental, but followed by additional rounds from two federal officers. Pretti succumbed to his injuries, marking the second U.S. citizen death linked to the unrest.

In both the Renee Good and Alex Pretti cases, investigations are still ongoing into the exact circumstances of both shootings. Nevertheless, based the available evidence and public reporting on these incidents, it appears that both anti-borders activists may still be alive today had they not made the unfortunate decisions to obstruct immigration enforcement operations.

Countering Political Obstruction, Criminal Resistance, and Terrorism

As the events in Los Angeles, Chicago, Portland, and Minneapolis show, elected officials have compounded the problem through both inflammatory rhetoric and, in some cases, direct physical interference with federal agents. A prominent example involved Kat Abughazaleh, (a former Media Matters journalist and progressive Democratic congressional candidate in Illinois), who was federally charged with conspiring to impede federal operations and assaulting an ICE officer during protests at the Broadview facility in Chicago.[50] Ilhan Omar, who represents the Minneapolis area in Congress, was likewise accused of inciting violence by attacking ICE and stressing that "we are going to make sure that these people pay for what they have done to us."[51] New York representative Dan Goldman, for his

[48] Anton Daniels, "New Footage of Alex Pretti Assaulting ICE Officers and Kicking Out Tail Lights of Government Vehicles," YouTube, January 29, 2026, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-_ndG5UUpM.

[49] "Videos and Witness Accounts Detail Fatal Shooting of Alex Pretti in Minneapolis," CNN, January 25, 2026, https://www.cnn.com/2026/01/25/us/alex-pretti-shooting-minneapolis-videos-witnesses-invs.

[50] "Former Media Matters Journalist, Progressive Congressional Candidate Charged for Allegedly Assaulting an ICE Officer," Breitbart, October 30, 2025, https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2025/10/30/former-media-matters-journalist-progressive-congressional-candidate-charged-for-allegedly-assaulting-an-ice-officer/.

[51] "Omar Ripped for 'Inciting Violence' After Minneapolis ICE Shooting: 'Make Sure These People Pay,'" Fox News, January 13, 2026, https://www.foxnews.com/politics/omar-ripped-inciting-violence-after-mn-ice-shooting-make-sure-people-pay.

part, downplayed the threat to law enforcement by tweeting that "[e]ven if the officer were run over, it's not domestic terrorism," adding that the administration was allegedly "inciting untrained thugs to murder Americans."[52]

Illegal alien criminals have likewise shown a brazen willingness to injure or kill officers to evade removal. In June 2025, Gabriel Hurtado-Cariaco, a Venezuelan national and suspected Tren de Aragua gang member, was charged with the attempted murder of a federal officer after violently attacking agents during an arrest in Nebraska.[53] Multiple other incidents involved criminal aliens ramming law enforcement vehicles during ICE operations, including a high-profile case in California that forced an agent to fire in self-defense.[54] Although there is a long history of illegal alien criminals attempting to injure or even kill immigration and other law enforcement agents, the hyper-intense anti-enforcement rhetoric and climate from anti-borders radicals generated a uniquely dangerous and permissive atmosphere emboldening criminals to violently resist. For instance, the vice mayor of the Los Angeles suburb of Cudahy dared criminal gangs in the area to fight officers working for ICE, which she dubbed "the biggest gang there is."[55] Such words no doubt made violent illegal alien criminals feel vindicated in their brutal and lawless actions. They also cut deep to the philosophical core of the radical anti-borders ideology, which views gang members and violent criminals as greatly preferable to immigration enforcement agents.

Terrorist-style threats and attacks have also targeted ICE directly. In September 2025, a sniper attacked the ICE field office in Dallas from a nearby rooftop, killing one detainee and critically wounding two others.[56] As so often happens during periods of revolutionary unrest, groups that the revolutionaries purport to help also become victims of the revolution. The shooter left anti-ICE messages inscribed on ammunition and notes declaring his intent to "cause terror" against immigration

[52] Jack Posobiec (@JackPosobiec), "The masks are all coming off. Look at what this Democrat congressman just said about our ICE officers." X, January 7, 2026, https://x.com/JackPosobiec/status/2009030123530399926.

[53] U.S. Dep't of Justice, "Venezuelan National and Suspected Tren de Aragua Member Charged with Attempted Murder of Federal Officer," June 20, 2025, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/venezuelan-national-and-suspected-tren-de-aragua-member-charged-attempted-murder-federal.

[54] "Federal Agent Opened Fire in California after Suspect 'Rammed Law Enforcement': DHS," Fox News, January 21, 2026, https://www.foxnews.com/us/dhs-alleges-criminal-illegal-alien-rammed-law-enforcement-california-operation-agent-fired-weapon.

[55] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, "Open-Borders Radical Politician Promotes Violence by Daring Gangs to Fight ICE," June 30, 2025, https://www.fairus.org/blog/2025/06/30/open-borders-radical-politician-promotes-violence-daring-gangs-fight-ice.

[56] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, "After Dallas Attack, Trump Administration Demands End to Anti-ICE Rhetoric," October 1, 2025, https://www.fairus.org/news/executive/after-dallas-attack-trump-administration-demands-end-anti-ice-rhetoric.

enforcement. These acts of violence have been accompanied by deliberate hoaxes, such as the case of a Mexican national who staged her own kidnapping by ICE agents in an attempt to slander immigration enforcement and solicit donations.[57] Protesters in Minneapolis, meanwhile, were quoted as saying "we have to show up with guns and end this" in reference to ICE operations in the city.[58] And in New York City, chants such as "Kristi Noem will hang" and "save a life, kill an ICE" also made an appearance.[59] Such tactics reveal a broader strategy of intimidation and disinformation designed to undermine public support for the rule of law.

In FAIR's recent investigative report titled *Quelling the Insurrection against Immigration Enforcement*, we provided an in-depth legal and factual assessment of this nationwide pattern of violent resistance, sanctuary defiance, and politicized obstruction directed against national immigration priorities.[60] Specifically, the report highlighted how laws like the Insurrection Act empower federal intervention when "unlawful obstructions, combinations, or assemblages" render the ordinary enforcement of federal law impracticable, or when conspiracies are afoot to obstruct federal authority and deprive individuals of rights secured by the Constitution.[61] The report concluded that, under those authorities, the Trump administration has strong legal grounds for decisive action to fully suppress these violent challenges to the rule of law.

Conclusion: Lessons for the West

The anti-borders campaign to undermine immigration enforcement constitutes a direct assault on a foundational pillar of American civilization. By shielding criminal aliens, intimidating law enforcement, and prioritizing ideology over

[57] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, "Illegal Alien Stages Kidnapping Hoax to Slander Immigration Enforcement," July 24, 2025, https://www.fairus.org/blog/2025/07/24/illegal-alien-stages-kidnapping-hoax-slander-immigration-enforcement.

[58] AWR Hawkins, "ICE Protester: We Have to 'Show Up with Guns and End This,'" Breitbart News, January 9, 2026, https://www.breitbart.com/2nd-amendment/2026/01/09/ice-protester-we-have-to-show-up-with-guns-and-end-this/.

[59] Melissa Koenig, Katrina Schollenberger, and Rachel Bowman, "Protesters Chant 'Save a Life, Kill an ICE' in NYC as 100 More Agents Descend on Minneapolis after Shooting," *The Daily Mail*, January 9, 2026, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15445847/minneapolis-minnesota-ice-shooting-renee-nicole-good-woman-shot-killed-live-updates.html.

[60] Fed'n for Am. Immigration Reform, *Quelling the Insurrection against Immigration Enforcement*, February 16, 2026, https://www.fairus.org/sites/default/files/2026-02/Investigative-Report-on-the-Insurrection-Act.pdf.

[61] 10 U.S.C. §§ 251–255, https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/subtitle-A/part-I/chapter-13.

citizen safety, radicals seek to force the Trump administration to retreat on its promise to uphold the rule of law. This cannot be permitted, both as a matter of principle and pragmatism – because concessions will be interpreted by extremists as weakness and will only embolden the radicals, thereby further escalating rather than de-escalating the situation.

European observers should draw clear lessons from this recent American experience. Analogous patterns of activist obstruction, sanctuary-style non-cooperation, and politicized resistance to border enforcement are evident across the continent. Successful Western societies, if they wish to remain successful and well-functioning, require the unapologetic enforcement of immigration laws, irrespective of radical opposition. Yielding invites chaos, while upholding the rule of law preserves the ordered liberty that attracts lawful migrants worldwide. Consistent immigration enforcement, backed by necessary legal tools when local authorities falter, is indispensable to safeguarding the principles that define civilized nations.

Perhaps most importantly, both Americans and Europeans must understand that immigration enforcement, especially when criminals and radicals violently resist and obstruct, will not always look clean and pretty. Indeed, as this article has shown, extremists such as America's professional anti-ICE protesters, will do their best to make enforcement look as bad as possible. However, if citizens desire a better future for themselves and their children, they cannot allow themselves to be emotionally manipulated or morally blackmailed. Immigration enforcement is an indispensable part of law enforcement.

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