

Deportation of Miami teacher exposes bipartisan character of attack on immigrants

Jane Wise**17 February 2025**

In a chilling example of the bipartisan assault on immigrant rights, a 24-year-old Miami-Dade County middle school science teacher, a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient, was detained and deported to Honduras by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The school where the young man taught was not notified of his removal. He simply stopped showing up for his classes. After a few days, the school administration reached out to his family and learned that ICE had detained him.

The exact reason for the teacher's detention and deportation remains unclear. DACA recipients must regularly renew their status every two years. Detention and deportation can be triggered by failing to meet DACA eligibility requirements, such as maintaining a clean criminal record, continuing education or employment, or the timely submitting of renewal applications.

The deportation took place under the Biden administration, one week before Trump's inauguration. The cruelty of the action, depriving children of a teacher in the middle of the school year, to say nothing of the impact on the young man himself and his own family, is characteristic of the US immigration system, regardless of which party is in power.

The teacher's deportation is not an isolated incident but rather a continuation of policies that have seen Democratic administrations deport even more immigrants than their Republican counterparts. While the Trump administration's rhetoric and policies have been ferociously hostile to immigrants, the groundwork for mass deportations was laid by previous administrations, including that of Barack Obama, who left office in 2017 with the well-deserved hatred of immigrant workers, who labeled him the "deporter in

chief."

When it comes to immigration enforcement, both major corporate parties have embraced harsh deportation policies.

During the George W. Bush administration (2001–2009), about 2 million individuals were deported—with annual figures rising from roughly 189,000 in FY 2001 to around 359,000 by FY 2008.

President Obama deported over 3.2 million people between 2009–2017, peaking at nearly 415,000 removals in FY 2012.

The first Trump administration deported just under 1 million individuals over four years—with a high of 267,000 in FY 2019, while the Biden administration certainly exceeded Trump's total.

While complete data for the final months of the Biden administration are not yet publicly available, existing reports indicate a significant increase in deportations during fiscal year 2024.

In the third quarter of FY 2024, ICE removed nearly 68,000 noncitizens, reflecting a 69 percent increase over the same period in fiscal year 2023. Additionally, by November 2024, approximately 678,000 repatriations had occurred.

These figures underscore that both major parties are operating from the same playbook on democratic rights. Neither capitalist party can claim moral high ground when the human cost of their draconian deportation practices is the goal, not the result, of their policies.

The deportation of the Miami-Dade teacher also highlights the precariousness of the DACA program, which, while offering temporary protection from deportation and the right to work or attend college, provides no pathway to citizenship and requires regular renewal, leaving recipients vulnerable to policy shifts.

While the Biden administration sought to fortify DACA, legal challenges prevented lifting Trump's suspension of new applications since 2020, reflecting the broader pattern of the Democrat's impotence in safeguarding social programs and democratic rights. This was starkly exemplified by the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022 despite Democrats holding the White House and a majority in Congress.

The response of the United Teachers of Dade to the detention of the middle school science teacher by ICE was one of confirmation, not condemnation. Union officials wrote a letter in support of the teacher to the immigration judge who ordered the deportation, but have not taken concrete actions to protect other members from a similar fate.

United Teachers of Dade is in line with the broader conciliatory approach of the national teachers' unions to the ongoing attack on the democratic rights of educators and students.

Recently, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten "respectfully" requested the reinstatement of sanctuary protections for schools, which Trump canceled as soon as he took office. The unions refuse to challenge attacks on teachers and students because they seek to impede the growing mass resistance in the working class.

The assault on democratic rights and the working class from the second Trump administration indicates a severe escalation of the drive to undermine civil liberties through an onslaught of executive actions.

On January 20, 2025, President Trump signed an executive order titled "Protecting the American People Against Invasion," which rescinded prior policies that limited immigration enforcement at sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals and places of worship. This policy change empowers ICE agents to conduct operations in these previously protected spaces, eroding safe havens for vulnerable populations.

Further exacerbating the situation, another executive order mandates that educational institutions monitor and report international students and staff to the Department of Homeland Security, effectively transforming universities into surveillance entities. This directive threatens deportation for foreign students participating in protests, stifling free expression and academic freedom.

Educators advocating for immigrant rights are being

targeted. For instance, Alondra Garcia, a second-grade bilingual teacher in Milwaukee and a DACA recipient, was suspended for sharing immigrant rights resources with parents.

Additionally, states and school districts have aligned with federal anti-immigrant policies. In Oklahoma, the state board of education endorsed a rule requiring proof of citizenship from families in public schools, a measure that critics argue violates the 14th Amendment and established Supreme Court precedents.

The working class must mobilize to defend immigrants and democratic rights. As the Educators Rank-and-File Committee states:

Trump's dictatorial policies can only be opposed by a united movement of educators, parents, students and the broadest sections of the working class. This requires the building of networks of rank-and-file committees at school sites and neighborhoods that are open to all teachers, support staff, students, and parents who want to organize collective action to defend democratic and social rights.



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